United Nations

A/C.1/56/PV.5

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee

5th meeting

Wednesday, 10 October 2001, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös .... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Sun (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by extending my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I assure you and the other members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation in dealing with the important issues that lie ahead.

The horrific terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania on 11 September were an immense tragedy not only for the United States, but for the entire world. We condemn all forms of terrorism and express our sympathy and solidarity with the United States as we build an international coalition to combat terrorism.

These heinous acts have awakened the international community to the need to deal with both old and new security threats. The primary purpose of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security and, to that end, to take effective measures for the prevention and removal of all threats to peace. Today, terrorism transcends the mere regional scale, and it has been demonstrated that terrorist groups with a global reach can shake the very contours of global security. Under those circumstances, the First Committee should first and foremost focus its energy on strengthening international systems that counter the proliferation of nuclear and biochemical weapons and missiles.

As I reflect upon the past year, I cannot help but think that more progress could have been made in the field of multilateral disarmament and arms control. Above all, we are deeply concerned about the continued stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. We have also been unable to implement all the measures contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), or to further develop various instruments. Of course, the complex and sensitive nature of international security makes it difficult to make progress in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Moreover, we increasingly find ourselves facing new security threats that require new strategies.

Despite continued efforts to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles, notably ballistic missiles, the spread of those weapons remains one of the most serious security threats to the international community. We believe that, as the Secretary-General urged in his report entitled "Road Map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326), the international community should strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and should keep all options open for achieving that aim. It is the long-held conviction of the Government of the Republic of Korea that we need to consolidate existing multilateral instruments and arrangements and at the same time develop an international system that is

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tailored to addressing new kinds of threats, as they often find a way to circumvent existing barriers.

Various draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will be debated in this Committee. Even though the headway made in the field of nuclear disarmament has not met our expectations, we should not lose patience and optimism. Indeed, disarmament is a product of dynamic global security circumstances. It should be evaluated over a long-term period, as it naturally goes through numerous ups and downs. We believe that nuclear disarmament should be a practical, step-by-step process based on a spirit of unequivocal commitment, as agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We are of the view that, as a first step to that end, bilateral nuclear reductions by the largest nuclear-weapon States need to be encouraged. Because the multilateral disarmament process should ensure that the momentum continues, progress in unilateral and bilateral nuclear reductions will create an atmosphere conducive to nuclear disarmament. My delegation also would like to underline the importance of universal adherence to and full compliance with the NPT.

It is disappointing that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is not yet in force, and that negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty have long been at a standstill. There is no doubt that the CTBT has established an effective and verifiable international norm against further nuclear testing, as demonstrated by the firm reaction to developments in 1998. We hope that the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT will attain its objectives. With respect to a fissile material cut-off treaty, it is certainly frustrating that the Conference on Disarmament has yet to commence negotiation of the treaty, which is the next logical step on the nuclear arms control and disarmament agenda. We look forward to seeing the early start of negotiations, a process that would certainly reinforce the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Pending negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, we call upon all relevant States to join a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

The recent terrorist attacks highlighted the importance of physical protection, accounting and nuclear non-proliferation measures that would prevent entities from acquiring and converting nuclear materials or technologies. In that vein, it is very encouraging that this year's General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency adopted an important resolution in a timely manner. The resolution emphasizes the importance of the physical protection of nuclear material in preventing its illicit use and the sabotage of nuclear facilities and nuclear materials. We hope that the Agency will embark on a thorough review of the relevant programmes to identify what can be done to enhance the security of nuclear material and facilities.

Recent developments have demonstrated that the international community can no longer afford to remain trapped in traditional ways of thinking when it comes to dealing with weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles. Nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles are no longer limited to cold-war rivalries or competitions for regional hegemony. Furthermore, we need to take steps to ensure that chemical and biological weapons do not become available as alternate tools for those States that lack nuclear capabilities. The recent warning by the Director-General of the World Health Organization, calling upon countries to strengthen their capacity to respond to the consequences of the use of biological or chemical agents as weapons, should not go unheeded.

Despite the long and painstaking process, we feel that it is unfortunate that negotiations to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) have failed to fulfil their mandate. Since the Convention falls far short of the mantra of disarmament instruments — trust but verify — we look forward to a constructive outcome with respect to the future direction of the BWC protocol at the Review Conference in November.

Global efforts to counter the growing threat posed by ballistic missile proliferation also need to be redoubled. I wish to note that the Panel of Governmental Experts on missiles has held its first session, in accordance with last year's General Assembly resolution 55/33 A, confirming the seriousness of the risks associated with missile proliferation and the urgent need to tackle that issue. Though we, as a Panel member, noted different priorities and approaches on the issue as well as some arguments that were only remotely related to the urgent priorities, we look forward to the expert Panel's development of constructive recommendations to address the issue. In that context, my delegation welcomes the recent adoption of a draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation, initiated by the Missile Technology Control Regime

(MTCR). We will look forward to the early launching and universalization of the draft code, which is significant as the first international norm against the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

In the field of conventional arms, the adoption of the Programme of Action at this year's United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was a veritable success. What made this achievement so meaningful was the fact that the entire international community came together to recognize the magnitude of these problems and to agree on measures to combat and prevent illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and global levels. It must be stressed, however, that the Programme of Action is to be regarded as the start of a long-term process with practical follow-up.

We firmly believe that the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons should start at the national level, at which Governments should make an effort to tighten control over the manufacture, stockpiling and transfer of these weapons. At the same time, the international community must act to address the root causes of conflict, which have a bearing on the illicit trafficking in, and destabilizing accumulation of, small arms. For this reason, enhanced efforts should be exerted in a concerted manner in all areas: disarmament, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

We have a broad arms-control agenda awaiting our renewed commitment. In the light of the recent terrorist attacks, I would like to reaffirm the need to sensitize ourselves to new threats to international security and disarmament. At the same time, we must not neglect our obligation to strengthen existing treaties and export control arrangements on the multilateral front. The value of multilateral disarmament instruments cannot be evaluated simply in terms of the reduced number of weapons. Rather, their beauty lies in the predictability and transparency they afford and in their ability to extract from Member States a stronger and more genuine level of commitment.

Mr. Chairman, as always, my delegation looks forward to working closely and constructively with you and other delegations in the coming weeks.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): I wish at the outset, Sir, to express my delegation's congratulations on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of this Committee. We are confident that under your able guidance, substantive progress will be made in our endeavours to advance the cause of disarmament. Our felicitations go also to the other members of the Bureau on their election. Let me avail myself of this opportunity to thank Ambassador U Mya Than for his leadership and for the contributions he made during the previous session as Chairman of this Committee. I would also like to express our appreciation to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his lucid and comprehensive statement on the various issues on our agenda.

Before proceeding further, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered yesterday by Ambassador U Kyaw Tint Swe of Myanmar on behalf of the member States of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The First Committee is meeting this year in an atmosphere of heightened expectation. In the Millennium Declaration, our heads of State and Government resolved to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim. There were concrete achievements at the conclusion of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held last year. The number of Member States which have adhered to the Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons has increased. There has also been an increase in the number of countries that have either acceded to or ratified the Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines. In addition, new proposals and initiatives are on the table — here in New York and in Geneva and Vienna — on a range of issues of concern and interest to all Member States.

However, expectations should not be equated with progress and success, for even a cursory survey of the current international scene will impress on us the distressing reality of virtual deadlock in arms reduction and disarmament. Despite a welter of statements, exhortations and resolutions on numerous occasions and in a variety of forums, we are now, in terms of global outlay and expenditures, some 35,000 nuclear warheads, a massive accumulation of conventional armaments and $800 billion further away from the goal of disarmament.

Far from realizing the promise of nuclear disarmament in the post-cold-war era, efforts by the international community to curb and eliminate these armaments have been deadlocked. The systematic and progressive efforts by the nuclear-weapon States have fallen far short of the commitments undertaken at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. More than a year after the unequivocal undertaking at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals, measures have not been identified, much less acted upon. Consequently, the goal of nuclear disarmament today seems more distant than ever.

Other developments are equally disconcerting. The START process is at a stalemate. The outcome of our endeavours for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains unclear. Negotiations under the auspices of the Ad Hoc Group for the verification protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention could not be completed. There is growing uncertainty over the future of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Furthermore, the information age has spawned a revolution in military affairs, which, among other things, is facilitating the militarization of outer space. Technological factors are having a direct impact on international security. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the growing lethality of technologies promises to set in motion a new generation of weapons of mass destruction. These retrograde developments constitute a quantum jump into the most dangerous aspects of the cold-war era.

We cannot accept the premise that nuclear weapons can be retained indefinitely and not used accidentally or intentionally, with disastrous consequences. The Secretary-General has solemnly warned the international community of nuclear dangers. While the cooperation between the nuclear-weapon States to reduce the dangers emanating from nuclear theft and nuclear terrorism is laudable, it must not distract us from their failure to achieve progress regarding the most imminent danger posed by nuclear warheads, many of which are on launch-on-warning readiness. Even the smallest warheads can kill thousands of innocent people, and, in fact, would inevitably kill tens of thousands if they were ever used. Hence, their retention is flawed, unjustified and immoral. The nuclear-weapon States share a joint and collective responsibility for their reduction and elimination.

In the new millennium, other priorities include eliminating the so-called tactical nuclear weapons; banning fissile materials for weapons purposes; arresting the acquisition of advanced weapons of mass destruction; maintaining the credibility of the non-proliferation regime; and concluding an international convention against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear-weapon States. These should constitute the thrust of the international community's concerted efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons and the dangers emanating from them. But these objectives cannot be achieved by new rationalizations for the continued retention of these armaments or by the reiteration of nuclear doctrines and posturing. The persistence of the old image of nuclear weapons as symbols of status and components of national power, which has for so long hindered disarmament, cannot be erased unless the obsolescence of nuclear weapons and the pervasive sense of global insecurity they have created are recognized.

The nuclear weapons and related issues are critically important for the Asia-Pacific region with its strategic importance, large population and sizeable economies, which will inevitably be affected by developments in disarmament and security. Its people are now confronted by new regional uncertainties and insecurities. Hence, in the context of the reciprocity of obligations, the nuclear-weapon States should faithfully implement both the letter and the spirit of agreements relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which are interlinked and inseparable. The lack of progress on the former will inevitably have an adverse impact on efforts towards the latter.

The significance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in preventing the development of more advanced weapons has been universally recognized. We are gratified that the prospects for achieving this long-sought goal have been bolstered by some positive developments. There has been a steady increase in the number of signatory and ratifying States, which today stands at 161 and 84, respectively. No nuclear explosions have been carried out since the conclusion of the test-ban Treaty in 1996, while a moratorium on testing has continued. Thus, a global no-testing norm now commands universal support. Substantive progress has also been made in creating an effective and reliable worldwide verification mechanism.

But as we are aware, the entry into force of the CTBT is dependent upon ratification by States listed in annex 2. My delegation shares the foreboding of other member States that delaying the entry into force of the Treaty increases the risk that nuclear testing could resume, leading to a renewed nuclear arms race, with its attendant instability and confrontation. The early entry into force of the Treaty has therefore become imperative. My Government has signed the Treaty and is in the process of its ratification, which is expected in the foreseeable future. Let me also mention parenthetically that Indonesia has presided over the Preparatory Committee for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in the second half of 2001.

As far as the Bangkok Treaty is concerned, the *raison d'être* was and will continue to be to insulate South-East Asia from the nuclear environment surrounding that region and to ensure security and stability. It exemplifies the commitment of States parties to non-proliferation. That Treaty, together with the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba, will ensure that the entire southern hemisphere remains free from the menace posed by nuclear weapons.

The Bangkok Treaty also epitomizes the problems faced in strengthening the efficacy of the zones that have recently come into existence. In their continuing endeavours to render the Treaty fully operable through the accession to its Protocol by the nuclear Powers, members States of the Association of South-East Asian Nations have been engaged in a series of intense consultations with the nuclear Powers in an earnest effort to seek a mutually satisfactory solution to the outstanding problems. We are gratified that important progress has been made and that these consultations will be continued, leading ultimately to the consolidation of the Bangkok Treaty.

The extension of the arms race into outer space portends incalculable consequences for disarmament. There can be no doubt that plans to develop strategic defence capabilities and an enlarged scope for anti-satellite weapons would introduce further destabilizing elements into the strategic environment. We know from past experience that every new development and innovation in nuclear weapons technology, whether offensive or defensive, has inexorably led to an acceleration of the arms race. In the context of outer space, that would be tantamount to a quantum leap in vertical proliferation and would usher an entirely new dimension into the arms race. Such developments would also undermine existing agreements on arms limitation, especially the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty). Furthermore, the astronomical costs involved in developing a space-based defence system, taken together with those incurred to counter such a move, would inevitably result in heightened strategic competition and greater mutual vulnerability and further deepen the global economic crisis. It is imperative, therefore, to stop the further militarization of outer space and to ensure that this pristine environment is used exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all mankind.

In this connection, it is pertinent to note also that existing international agreements are inadequate and ambiguous and contain loopholes to prevent an arms race in outer space. In a document circulated last year, the Group of 21 stated that the prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter imminent attempts for the further militarization of outer space. Unless urgent action is taken, including the strengthening of the current legal regime, there is little doubt that the last frontier of human endeavour will soon turn into a new battleground.

Indonesia shares the increasing concern of States in our region over the implications of the development, proliferation and deployment of ballistic missiles, which can carry both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. A large number of missiles have placed the security of States in jeopardy, as they have capabilities to target major cities and population centres. These ominous developments have underscored the need for a multilaterally negotiated, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreement to reduce and eliminate destabilizing ballistic missiles without hindering their application for peaceful purposes.

Indonesia hopes that the establishment of a panel of governmental experts on missiles by the Secretary-General to study this issue will be a first step leading to an outcome that would take into account the security interests of all nations. This is the first time that Member States have decided to focus attention on the issue of missiles as a source of instability. It is anticipated that the panel's recommendations will include issues such as limiting the production and deployment of missiles, a global missile warning system and other ways of controlling missile proliferation, incentives to encourage States to abstain from producing long-range missiles and a multilateral regime or convention to counter missile proliferation.

Our attention is also drawn to plans for missile defence that will inevitably have far-reaching repercussions for existing arms control treaties and on the prospects for future agreements. These would be incompatible with the limiting provisions of the ABM Treaty, which has been recognized by its signatories as a critical component of strategic stability and an indispensable element to further reduce strategic armaments. While missile defence will have global consequences, Asia, where it may trigger a new and vicious arms race, will be the region most affected. Hence, the need for a comprehensive approach through negotiations to address these new concerns in resolving this issue is all too self-evident.

It is regrettable to note that, during the past four years, the Conference on Disarmament has not initiated negotiations on any issue and has not established any ad hoc committees. A lack of consensus on its programme of work has resulted in a deadlock on every item on its agenda. This stalemate has called into question its credibility as the sole multilateral negotiating body in this field. It also faces the prospects of being further marginalized. In this era of globalization, the international community must act jointly for an integrated and multilateral approach to disarmament issues, which have become global and indivisible. It should also be recognized that the multilateral character of this body has in the past clarified the complexities attendant upon disarmament, especially in its nuclear dimension, and facilitated arms limitation treaties. The challenge now is to reassert its primacy and its unique character. We believe that the time has come for this forum to break the impasse and initiate negotiations on the priority issues that have for far too long languished on its agenda. As a member of the Conference on Disarmament, Indonesia remains totally committed to multilateralism and to negotiations under its auspices.

The Programme of Action adopted by consensus by the recently concluded United Nations Conference on small arms and light weapons is a substantive document, containing a number of practical measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in these weapons in all its aspects. It sets out a realistic, achievable and comprehensive approach in addressing the relevant problems at the national, regional and global levels. It made an important contribution in promoting international cooperation and assistance in dealing with the serious and persistent problems caused by the illicit trade in small arms. And it succeeded in mobilizing the political will of the international community and in establishing a follow-up and review mechanism. The implementation of its recommendations will make a constructive contribution to national and regional security.

Finally, Indonesia and other non-aligned countries are committed to the convening of a fourth General Assembly special session devoted to disarmament. We are gratified to note some forward movement in this regard, especially regarding objectives and agenda. We see the session's convening, with the participation of all States, as being in the common interest to limit and eliminate armaments through a balanced approach that will ensure a substantive outcome and success of our endeavours.

I would be remiss in my duty if before concluding I did not refer to the horrible tragedy that took place in this very city of New York on 11 September, with its horrendous consequences. Rather than diminishing our resolve, this unimaginable incident should reinvigorate and galvanize our concerted efforts towards strengthening international cooperation not only in combating terrorism, but also in promoting international peace and security for all States. It must also provide us with the necessary stimulus for political will and determination to break the impasse in multilateral efforts to further the cause of disarmament.

Mr. Noboru (Japan): At the outset, I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee at this very important juncture. I am very confident that, with the benefit of your diplomatic experience and skill, the deliberations in the Committee will be most constructive and fruitful. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you discharge your responsibilities.

I was deeply horrified when I learned of the outrageous terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September, which caused unspeakable destruction and took the lives of countless innocent people. On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I should like to express my profound condolences to the bereaved families of the victims. The horrific attacks have made it all too clear that now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, terrorism is a real and imminent threat, not only to the United States, but to every country throughout the world. The international community must be united in its determination to combat and eventually eradicate terrorism. Japan, for its part, has already announced several concrete and effective measures to enable it to contribute to the joint international efforts to respond to the recent terrorist attacks. It is, for example, taking the necessary legislative steps to dispatch its self-defence forces to provide support to the United States and other forces combating terrorism.

In the fight against terrorism, priority should be given to strengthening international law to bring terrorists to justice; to eradicating State-sponsored terrorism; and to further strengthening non-proliferation regimes to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. I highly appreciate Secretary-General Kofi Annan's address to the General Assembly on 1 October, in which he enumerated several very relevant measures in this regard. The concrete steps which Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala pointed out in his opening statement to the Committee also deserve serious attention.

In addition to the growing threat of terrorism, unresolved regional conflicts continue to take their toll and are potential destabilizing factors. Moreover, there is a realistic fear that these disputes could escalate to the point where weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, are used. The peaceful resolution of these conflicts is thus a high priority in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The primary concerns of the Committee, of course, are disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Achievements in these areas will definitely contribute to global and regional security. Overall, however, the trends are not positive. Most notably, the Conference on Disarmament has not succeeded in commencing any substantive negotiations, despite the positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We are also gravely concerned about the lack of momentum towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is a linchpin for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is truly regrettable that some States seem to be losing their political will to adhere to the Treaty.

I should now like to lay out some issues that the international community should address in order to reverse these negative trends and thus strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

First, it is imperative to redouble our efforts for the revitalization of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation norms. It is incumbent upon all States parties to strengthen the NPT regime as a top priority, by pursuing universal adherence to the NPT and by guaranteeing full compliance with it.

In this connection, Japan has taken initiatives to promote the universality of the IAEA full-scope safeguards agreement and its additional protocols. In June 2001 it hosted an international symposium in Tokyo to urge the Asia-Pacific countries to bring them into force. At the same time, it is of the utmost importance for the nuclear-weapon States to renew their commitment to, and demonstrate tangible progress in, nuclear disarmament by taking, in a timely manner, the practical steps related to article VI of the NPT, agreed in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. Above all, Japan attaches great importance to the early entry into force of the CTBT, the immediate commencement of the fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations and the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament.

We believe that the CTBT is an important pillar of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, since it provides an essential means of constraining the development of nuclear weapons. We therefore urge all those who have not signed or ratified this Treaty to be attentive to the message that the conference for the facilitation of the entry into force of the CTBT will be setting forth in due course. We also stress the importance of maintaining the moratoriums on nuclear testing, pending the entry into force of the CTBT.

Japan very much welcomes the intensive consultations between Russia and the United States on the interrelated subjects of offensive and defensive systems in order to establish a new framework for strategic stability. We should like to engage in close dialogue with both States on those subjects. At the same time, we hope that Russia and the United States will act expeditiously and take the necessary steps to reduce the number of their nuclear weapons, in the context of the new framework, to 2,000 and 2,500, respectively — the level to which both States agreed during the START process; hopefully, they will reduce them to an even lower level.

Japan would also like to participate constructively in the preparation for the NPT review process that will begin next spring with a view to ensuring the success of the Review Conference in 2005.

Despite the adverse trends in nuclear disarmament — perhaps I should say because of those trends — Japan is considering introducing, again this year, a resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons" to stress the need for swift implementation of the conclusions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We look forward to its adoption with the support of an overwhelming majority.

Secondly, we should not diminish our efforts to strengthen the biological and chemical weapons Conventions. Although the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was not able to reach agreement on a verification protocol by the target date this year, the States parties should continue to seek ways to enhance confidence in and compliance with the Convention. The forthcoming Review Conference should be an important occasion for the States parties to demonstrate their collective will to strengthen the Convention.

The recent terrorist attacks have reminded Japanese citizens of the horrific sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway in 1995. In order to prevent terrorists from using biological or chemical weapons, all States should tighten their national legislation and export controls on sensitive materials, equipment and technology related to such weapons.

Thirdly, the international community must create universal rules to prevent and curb the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which poses a serious threat to world peace and stability. Leading the regional efforts in Asia, where ballistic missile proliferation directly affects its own security environment, Japan hosted in Tokyo this March the first ever discussion with Asian countries on international measures to cope with this issue. Japan will also continue to actively participate in the discussions on the international code of conduct and in the work of the United Nations panel of governmental experts on missiles in order to establish a multilateral framework to halt and reduce the threat of proliferation.

Fourthly, disarmament in the field of conventional weapons should also be pursued by the international community. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in July 2001, adopted a very significant Programme of Action. Japan will actively contribute to its implementation.

Japan has been active in Cambodia in the field of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and it now intends to extend cooperation and assistance to other countries and regions. My delegation, together with those of Colombia and South Africa, will also sponsor a resolution aimed at consolidating our efforts to follow up on the Conference. We will also organize a seminar on this matter early next year in Tokyo.

The Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, scheduled to take place in December, is expected to achieve significant results on such issues as the extension of the scope of application of the Convention and its Protocols to internal conflicts, explosive remnants of war and anti-vehicle mines. In this context, Japan has decided to co-sponsor the proposal to adopt a protocol which restricts the use of anti-vehicle mines. Furthermore, Japan will continue to urge those States which have not acceded to the Ottawa Convention to do so with a view to achieving a total and universal ban on anti-personnel mines.

Fifthly, Japan believes that it is critical for the Conference on Disarmament to continue its deliberations on its improved and more effective functioning next year in order to fulfil its role as the negotiating body on disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament should consider significant reforms, including a review of its consensus rule, which is, in our view, too strict, and could discourage flexibility among member States. The reinvigoration of the Conference on Disarmament is an essential key to the revitalization of the multilateral disarmament process in its entirety.

Finally, I would like to offer a word of appreciation for the activities of the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament. I personally attended the United Nations Disarmament Conferences held in Wellington in March and in Kanazawa, Japan, in August this year. Both Conferences were meaningful in encouraging regional discussions on disarmament and security issues and in enhancing public knowledge of related concerns. We look forward to the continuation of the active role of all three United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: It gives me great pleasure to convey to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee for this session, and also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

At the outset, Egypt would like to reiterate its condemnation of the notorious terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September and its profound condolences to the American Administration and the American people.

Recently, we have witnessed expressions of international solidarity against terrorism in all its forms. An equal measure of impetus and strong international solidarity is now necessary to achieve further progress in disarmament efforts, to fulfil the commitments we have made and to strive to achieve the universality of disarmament treaties.

Over the past two years, we have witnessed widening differences among States on established and agreed priorities in the field of disarmament. The Secretary-General of the United Nations referred to these differences in paragraph 75 of his report on the work of the Organization. We therefore find it necessary to reaffirm the priorities of the international community in the field of disarmament. These were clearly established in the 1978 Final Document of the General Assembly's special session devoted to disarmament, which accorded absolute priority to efforts for disarmament in the area of nuclear weapons, followed by other weapons of mass destruction and, ultimately, by conventional weapons. This order of priority will continue to guide our work until nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their attendant dangers are totally eliminated. Here, we reiterate the need to agree on the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament at the earliest possible date.

The world today is facing numerous challenges in the field of disarmament. Attempts to modernize nuclear arsenals are continuing. The strategic situation is used by the major Powers as a pretext to continue with the arms race. Certain States continue to ignore the appeals of the international community to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and place their nuclear facilities under international supervision. Some States continue to adhere to the outdated doctrines of deterrence.

These challenges call for a collective response by the international community in order to have States honour commitments made. As a result, a number of initiatives have been launched for the elimination of nuclear weapons. They include the initiative of the New Agenda Coalition, of which Egypt is a member. This initiative and subsequent General Assembly resolutions have achieved marked success. The members of the Coalition played a distinctive role in the Sixth NPT Review Conference, which resulted in the adoption of 13 practical steps for the implementation of article VI of that Treaty, pertaining to the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Egypt will continue to play its role within the New Agenda Coalition as an expression of its deep commitment to nuclear disarmament and to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the dangers they pose.

Egypt regrets the continued failure by the Conference on Disarmament to agree on an agenda for the last five years. We also regret the lack of political will on the part of the five nuclear-weapon States to enter into meaningful, multilateral negotiations for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. This lack of will is incompatible with the obligations of the nuclear-weapon States under article VI of the NPT as it is also incompatible with the Final Document of the Eighth Review Conference.

In this context, Egypt reaffirms that the approach of international action must be based on the following points:

First, there is a need to conclude a universal, non-discriminatory treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and a treaty on the prohibition of fissile materials, including their stockpiles.

Secondly, there is a need for international recognition that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Thirdly, there is a need to establish international arrangements to ensure the non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We look forward to serious action in this direction at the Conference on Disarmament so as to arrive at arrangements that go beyond the scope of Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995). As such, they would comprise the elements of complete protection and necessary assistance and would thus enjoy both credibility and a deterrent character.

Fourthly, there is a need to deal seriously, within the Conference on Disarmament, with the question of the cessation of the arms race in outer space. We regret the failure of the Conference to deal with this matter. We reiterate the imperative need to put an end to the destructive arms race, which squanders human energy, before it spirals out of control. Egypt, along with Sri Lanka, will submit this year a draft resolution in this context.

The Middle East region continues to witness a clear imbalance. All States of the region have adhered to the NPT. They fulfil the commitments and obligations arising from this adherence. Nevertheless, Israel has chosen not to respond to the efforts under way in the region. It continues to cling to the nuclear option on the basis of outdated doctrines of deterrence. The international community remains silent. It has not insisted on the implementation of the numerous international resolutions that call on Israel to accede to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The most recent of these resolutions was contained in the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference of the NPT.

Egypt will closely follow the implementation of the results of the Sixth Review Conference, which reaffirmed the importance of Israel's acceding to the NPT and placing all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA. Egypt calls for a follow-up of the implementation of the results of that Conference, in accordance with the agreement reached in its Final Document. All States party to the Treaty, particularly the nuclear-weapon States and other interested States, should submit their reports to the Preparatory Committee in its meeting to be held next April. These reports must contain the steps that States have taken towards the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

We reiterate Egypt's firm commitment to achieving the goals and principles of non-proliferation in the Middle East and in the world as a whole. We are keenly aware that facing the menace of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is an urgent task that brooks no delay. It was on the basis of this profound belief that in April 1990 President Hosni Mubarak launched his initiative on turning the Middle East into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. This was a natural extension of Egypt's call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

In June 1998, President Mubarak launched his more comprehensive initiative on the holding of an international conference on freeing the world of all weapons of mass destruction, foremost of these being nuclear weapons. This initiative is in consonance with the United Nations Secretary-General's call for the convening of a major international conference to consider ways to eliminate nuclear risks.

There have been many initiatives and numerous international resolutions calling for rendering the Middle East into a nuclear-weapon-free zone and they all enjoy international support. Nevertheless, Israel has not yet responded to the demand of the international community that it adhere to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system. Nor has it responded to regional or international suggestions and endeavours to begin serious negotiations on the procedural and substantive aspects of ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This makes us all the more determined to make serious and effective progress to shield the Middle East region from the horror of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Egypt participates in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects. We believe that the study of this question must be comprehensive; it must not be confined to certain aspects of the missile issue. Egypt stresses that any consideration of the issue of missiles must take place within the United Nations. It must be borne in mind that any attempt to deal with this subject outside the Organization is doomed to certain failure.

The question of transparency in armaments continues to be dealt with in a way that is inconsistent with resolution 46/36 L, which established the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Shortcomings and ambiguities still plague the work of the Register. In our view, transparency in armaments should encompass all types of weapons and their technologies, including weapons of mass destruction, in addition to military holdings and procurement through national production. It is a mistake to limit this to certain types of weapons and to exclude others.

In the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference, the States parties reiterated the need for the nuclear-weapon States to increase transparency with regard to nuclear weapon capability and implementation of agreements, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty. Those very same States are the ones that are opposing this call here. This dichotomy raises questions in our minds about the seriousness of some of the positions taken by States on this subject.

Egypt welcomes the success of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the agreement on the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade of these arms. It is our hope that the Programme, which my country supports, will contribute to the elimination of this problem, which threatens the lives and security of civilian populations. While fully understanding the wish of some affected States to see this question move beyond the regional level to occupy a place on the list of international priorities, we cannot overlook the fact that international action in this regard is governed by a certain clearly agreed order of priorities, as was mentioned earlier.

Egypt has suffered, and continues to suffer, from the problem of landmines for the last 50 years. The warring parties in the Second World War planted nearly 23 million landmines on Egyptian territory. Therefore, we approach this landmine problem from a practical and realistic point of view, rather than from an abstract one. We see it through the prism of suffering that has lasted for more than five decades, during which thousands of lives have been lost.

Egypt has stated its position on the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of landmines in various international forums. I need not state it again. Egypt's position will remain unchanged, despite our appreciation for the humanitarian objective of the Convention. This is due to the severe shortcomings of the Convention and because it does not take Egypt's concerns into account and fails to deal with all the aspects of the problem.

Mr. Ulland (Norway): I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and assure you of Norway's full support and cooperation.

The appalling act of terror that struck this city and Washington, D.C., on 11 September gives cause for the strongest condemnation and our full solidarity with the American people and the United States Government. This attack has demonstrated the need for international coalition-building and a determined effort to combat terrorism. We are all affected by the events of 11 September. That is why we must make common cause of the fight against international terrorism.

The work of this Committee is highly relevant to our efforts to make the world a safer place. Weapons of mass destruction could pose an even darker threat in the hands of terrorists. We are convinced that close international cooperation and a multilateral approach to non-proliferation and disarmament are essential if we wish to reduce the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and the terrorist threat to international peace and security. Our response to those who disrupt and destroy should be a new resolve to make fuller use of the United Nations, to break the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and to strengthen the international non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. This is the time not for business as usual in dealing with non-proliferation and disarmament, but for a radical look at how peace and security can best be assured in the new millennium.

We already have a broad framework to build on, which consists of multilateral and bilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. Effective implementation and continued strengthening of these regimes must form an integral part of any future strategy. We need to make a fresh effort for universal adherence to key existing treaties, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). And we need to establish new regimes to address new issues, such as the production of weapons-grade fissile material, the proliferation of ballistic missiles, a verification and control regime to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention and measures to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Let me focus briefly on a number of issues we believe are highly important to address at this stage. The landmark outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference set the international community an ambitious nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda for the next five years. The Final Document identified 13 steps for the systematic and progressive achievement of nuclear disarmament. But progress has been disappointingly slow since then. Let us make use of this session of the First Committee to reconfirm our commitment to the NPT plan of action and to take steps to make the first preparatory committee in April 2002 a success.

One of the agreed steps in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference is the early entry into force and the full implementation of START II and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible, while preserving and strengthening the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) as a cornerstone for strategic stability and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons. We welcome the signs that the United States and Russia are prepared to considerably reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals. We will welcome deep cuts, and we prefer to see such reductions enshrined in formal, verifiable agreements. This would be in line with the principles of irreversibility and transparency of the NPT Final Document.

We believe that continuation of the ABM Treaty, in an adjusted form if necessary, or the establishment of a similar and agreed framework, is important for maintaining global strategic stability. We hope the United States and Russia will be able to reach mutual understanding on the elements of a new strategic framework, which will take into consideration the security concerns of all nations that are affected by the relations between those two countries.

The NPT Final Document called for steps by the nuclear-weapon States to further reduce their arsenals of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process. We continue to stress the need for further reductions in these arsenals and for increased transparency. We note in this context that NATO recently proposed a set of transparency measures to Russia, and we support efforts by NATO and Russia, and the United States and Russia, to pursue a dialogue on this important subject.

The proliferation of ballistic missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction is causing growing international concern, and a number of initiatives have been undertaken to curb and reverse this trend. The emphasis must be on a broad approach and a comprehensive strategy. Political, economic and diplomatic means are all important in this respect. Global and multilateral steps are needed. Norway supports the establishment of an international code of conduct as a basis for strengthened international efforts in this field, and we encourage all countries to join this important initiative. We look forward to receiving the report of the United Nations panel of governmental experts on missiles before the next session of the General Assembly.

Negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty continues to be a key priority for Norway within the Conference on Disarmament. If we are confident that no new fissile material for nuclear weapons will be produced, this will facilitate the efforts to ensure effective and verifiable disarmament. Negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty would be an extremely important non-proliferation measure. We therefore make an urgent appeal to all States to contribute to overcoming the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. This would be a clear sign that it is not just business as usual in the wake of 11 September, but that a new political will has been created. Pending such a development, we welcome activities outside the Conference on Disarmament that can help maintain interest in and expertise on issues related to the fissile material cut-off treaty and that can be useful in preparing future negotiations in the Conference.

Norway attaches the greatest importance to achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its early entry into force. Bringing the Treaty into force will be essential for broader efforts to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. The upcoming article XIV Conference should be instrumental in achieving this end.

Verification is the key to the effectiveness of all arms control and disarmament treaties. Norway has made a substantial contribution to CTBT verification. We are hosting and running six facilities in the International Monitoring System. We have a strong interest in the early entry into force of the Treaty. We look forward to the continued cooperation and support of all signatory and ratifying States in the build-up of all the elements of the CTBT's verification system.

The position of the nuclear Powers is crucial to the CTBT. Self-imposed moratoriums on nuclear testing are a useful measure pending the entry into force of the Treaty, but cannot replace the legally binding commitments represented by signing and ratification. We were disappointed by the recent announcement by the United States that it is to withdraw from certain activities under the Treaty and not reconsider its position on ratification. We appeal to all countries that have not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty unconditionally and without delay, and hope in particular that the United States and China will soon follow the United Kingdom, France and Russia.

We are strongly committed to the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and expect full and effective implementation of its provisions by all States parties. Another landmark treaty in the international non-proliferation regime is the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Norway is giving high priority to the efforts to achieve an effective protocol to strengthen this Convention, which should include mechanisms for verification and confidence-building. A multilateral, legally binding instrument is needed to fill the existing gap in the non-proliferation regime. We regret the lack of results in the Ad Hoc Group in Geneva so far. Despite the lack of an agreed protocol after six years of negotiations, we believe we still have a vehicle that could bring the process forward. The Ad Hoc Group's mandate remains in force. We should therefore make use of the Review Conference in November to reconfirm the States parties' commitment to the aims set out in the mandate.

Let me now turn from the weapons of mass destruction to the weapons that are responsible for the largest number of casualties. Norway welcomes the Programme of Action agreed at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July. Even though the outcome could have been more ambitious in certain respects, we believe that the Programme of Action is a good starting point and a foundation on which we can build. We hope that the General Assembly will confirm and consolidate the Programme of Action, so that we can focus on active follow-up and implementation. To be successful in our efforts, we need to mobilize Governments and civil society, the United Nations and its agencies, regional organizations and the non-governmental organizations. We look forward to concrete follow-up measures from the Secretary-General. We believe that the first meeting of States should take place in 2003. We welcome the Security Council's involvement and the decision to request a report by September next year on how the Council can help prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms.

In our national efforts we will give high priority to assisting affected countries and regions. A United Nations feasibility study on an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit arms should be undertaken as soon as possible, and governmental experts should be nominated in the course of this year. We want to work with interested Governments and NGOs to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation on brokering. We believe that international instruments on tracing and brokering should be the ultimate aim of these efforts.

Norway continues to have a strong commitment to the implementation of the Convention banning anti-personnel mines. We have come a long way towards universalization and in implementation of the Convention in a short time. We are pleased to see a decrease in the use of mines as well as in the number of new mine victims and countries producing anti-personnel mines. The active participation of the mine-affected countries and NGOs in particular through the International Campaign to Ban Landmines is impressive and most encouraging.

Despite these positive developments, anti-personnel mines continue to maim people and threaten societies in many countries and to undermine efforts to achieve social and economic progress. Mine clearance and awareness, assistance to victims and stockpile destruction must continue. Norway maintains its commitment to allocate $120 million over a five-year period to practical mine action activities. We congratulate the Government of Nicaragua on organizing the successful Third Meeting of the States parties to the Convention. Nicaragua will introduce the draft resolution on the implementation of the Ottawa Convention in the Committee this year, and we ask all delegations to support it. We align ourselves with the comprehensive statement of the European Union on this subject and have also associated ourselves with the European Union intervention in general.

Norway welcomes initiatives aimed at minimizing the humanitarian problems caused by the indiscriminate effects of weapons in conflicts. We support proposals to extend the scope of application of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to include internal conflicts. We are also in favour of proposals to improve the standard of weapons and extend the Convention to cover new types of weapons and munitions.

In this connection, I commend the International Committee of the Red Cross for its active role in drawing attention to the issue of explosive remnants of war. Recent conflicts have confirmed that this is an enormous humanitarian problem. We believe it needs to be addressed urgently and in a credible way. Norway thus supports the idea of a new protocol to the CCW that specifically aims to reduce the indiscriminate effects of explosive remnants of war. The upcoming Review Conference should mandate a group of governmental experts to look into the various aspects and make proposals. A time-frame for the group's work would be helpful. This will clearly be in line with the Convention's objective, and may also contribute to a much needed revitalization of the CCW.

Extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary efforts to eliminate threats from weapons of mass destruction. In the aftermath of the senseless terrorist attack on the United States it is more important than ever to make progress in the areas of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. My delegation is looking forward to working closely and constructively with other delegations to achieve this in the time ahead.

Mr. Vega (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like first to congratulate you, Sir, and your Bureau on your election. We wish you every success.

Since this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor on its own behalf, allow me to assure you of the full participation of Chile in the common, collective task that lies before us. This task is to jointly promote increasingly higher levels of human security for individuals, communities, nations and all of humanity. In this endeavour, you can rely on our unswerving commitment and support.

In addition to positions stated in the Declaration of the Rio Group, my country would like to emphasize a few aspects of a political nature.

Our debate today is taking place in the midst of a watershed event in our search for complete and non-discriminatory security — a security that permits persons, regardless of their sex, age, nationality, religion, culture, language, political ideas, colour or ethnic origin, or indeed of any characterization, to aspire to live their lives under basic conditions of certainty and peace.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 were a watershed experience in many respects. They have demonstrated to us in a tragic, real and definitive way some of the negative dimensions of globalization. Along with condemnation of the acts and solidarity with the United States and the thousands of innocent persons affected, there has emerged a powerful desire to ensure that terrorism does not impose its logic and its laws. That is why 11 September is a watershed experience. The attacks were a crime against the United States and humanity, as well as against the fundamental principles of liberty, democracy, justice and the rule of law. As many others have stated in recent days, these are not solely Western principles; they are the foundations of a just, humane and decent society in any religion or cultural tradition. Our country wishes to reiterate here the view it has already stated, and which it will continue to express tirelessly: there is no neutrality when faced with those who place themselves outside the basic human framework of norms necessary for any form of social coexistence.

Nevertheless, like all tragedies, this one also presents an opportunity to learn lessons that can guide us to paths leading to the peace and justice we hope for. We know today that the fate of each of our countries is the fate of all the peoples of the world; and that this is a world in which no one can live alone, without regard for the fears, concerns and problems of others. The United Nations is the foremost universal Organization, the place where mankind can pursue the development and expansion of human rights, solidarity and cooperation. It is an institution that recognizes the principle of the equality of all its Members and attaches dignity to their values, needs, hopes and sufferings.

Terrorism is precisely the opposite of those common aspirations. It is a nightmare that seeks to replace politics and the search for peace with the blind force of violence, and justice and the celebration of life with radicalism and the indiscriminate sweep of death.

The most important common element in all the reactions that have been expressed is the conviction that the terrorists attacked not only the United States but all civilizations, and all of us who comprise this complex and diverse reality that is humankind. It is this aspect that justifies and demands collective action, within the framework of law and using multilateral instruments, which serve to better shape the international community's actions.

In his letter of 11 September addressed to the President of the United States, President Ricardo Lagos Escobar of Chile stated that

> "We cannot, and must not, falter in the fight against terrorism. It is the responsibility of the international community ... Chile will do all within its power to contribute to the eradication of this senseless policy of terrorism from the international arena".

It is from this perspective that we wish to look critically at the work done in the area of security and disarmament during the past year, between the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions of the General Assembly.

I believe that it is a generally held view in this room that this year has been a disappointing one. The Conference on Disarmament, which is the only forum available to the international community to negotiate universal arms control instruments, has been incapable of agreeing upon a programme of work for the fourth consecutive year. As a result, negotiations on a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for military purposes have not begun, although there is consensus in the Conference regarding such a mandate. Nor has it been possible to implement a mandate on a discussion of nuclear disarmament within a subsidiary organ of the Conference — a discussion that, by its very nature, cannot but be understood as a stage prior to negotiations — in other words, a pre-negotiation phase. In our view, that is an essential step towards translating into action — as stated in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) —

> "an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI". (*NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II), p. 14, para. 6)*

Part of the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament involves issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. My country believes that this is a real issue that cannot be ignored, and one on which we should begin an exchange of views in the spirit established by the Amorim proposal for the programme of work.

Chile is convinced of the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as an instrument of the international community to create better security conditions for all the inhabitants of the world. Moreover, we believe that it represents a store of experience for the cause of disarmament in the world that cannot, and should not, be wasted. We therefore welcome the positive signs noted by Ambassador Camilo Reyes during his chairmanship, when he succeeded in appointing three special coordinators to review the agenda of the Conference and the issue of enlarging its membership, and to consider ways to make it function better and more efficiently.

We wish to reaffirm the position we expressed, when we had the honour of chairing the Conference this year, on the need to continue our efforts to break the stalemate in the Conference and not to allow an attitude of abandonment to take root and lead to the "death" of the Conference. If the Conference did not exist, we would be working towards its creation.

On the basis of Chile's strict respect for international law, we again stress the value of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in which it emphasized the

> "obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". (*A/51/218, annex, p. 37*)

This Advisory Opinion constitutes a solid doctrinal base that should not be disregarded. We are faced here with an important link between questions of disarmament law and humanitarian law.

In the work on the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons, we have seen the long and arduous process aimed at strengthening the Convention through the adoption of a verification protocol come to a halt. The strenuous and commendable efforts of Ambassador Tibor Tóth to achieve consensus on his compromise text were fruitless, and the process itself degenerated into an unnecessary and sterile confrontation. Achieving the task of lending credibility to the prohibition of the development, production, use and transfer of biological weapons is today more distant than ever.

The muted expressions of satisfaction produced by the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects can turn into real satisfaction only when we see sure progress being made towards the implementation of the Ottawa Convention. However, much still remains to be done to provide relief to peoples affected by crime and armed conflicts, which feed on the unregulated circulation of such weapons. Chile has stressed on more than one occasion the need to severely limit the manufacture and illicit trade in these weapons.

Given that this is an issue very closely linked to human suffering, we must favour restrictions that protect life over the pure and simple freedom of trade. We agree with the Secretary-General that there are potential benefits for mankind in establishing controls on the private ownership of such weapons and prohibitions against their transfer to non-State entities. That cannot possibly be more obvious today, after what we have just experienced.

As we stated at the Conference on Disarmament, the Ottawa Convention stands out as an alternative example of what it is possible to achieve in the field of international security and disarmament. The Convention shows that small and medium-sized States can achieve the critical mass necessary to produce results that improve the lives of millions of human beings.

I have the honour to announce that, on 10 September 2001, Chile deposited with the Secretary-General its instrument of ratification of this Convention. I wish to note that at the ceremony were representatives of Canada and Norway, States that campaigned vigorously for the Convention and with which we share a set of common values in the field of human security. We wish to reiterate our commitment to the idea of making our region a zone free of this type of weapon, and we stress the need to achieve the universality of the Convention.

With regard to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, it is clear that there is a need to recognize the importance of the security of the international maritime transport of radioactive wastes and spent nuclear fuel. Chile has been among the countries that have worked hard to keep that concern alive in the First Committee and in various other forums. We believe that this issue too is related to international security. For that reason, and because earlier this year we again noted such movements along our coast, we want to reaffirm the need to continue to take steps to regulate these activities, steps commensurate with the highest applicable levels of security.

A moment ago I spoke of the opportunities that can be created by a watershed experience, especially one like the events that took place in New York but a few weeks ago. In our view, the condemnation and sympathy aroused by the terrorist attacks against the United States confirm the transcendent value of solidarity. The fight against terrorism is an international task, and it must be closely linked to our common effort to attain human security, something that goes beyond the security of States and to which disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation all contribute.

It is true that we have reached a watershed in our collective search for human security. But this will be a positive moment only if we rediscover and place new value on international solidarity, which can be most effectively channelled, politically, legally and socially, through multilateralism. There is a road that leads to multilateralism and another that leads away from it. The dynamics of international relations always leave room for manoeuvre that enables us to take the second road. But it is also true that by taking that road we can abandon multilateralism to a degree that flies in the face of political common sense. And I am sure that all of us in this room favour the elimination of political folly.

As we have stated elsewhere, Chile participates actively in multilateral forums on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation based on the principle of the indivisibility of international security, according to which all States, regardless of their size and influence, bear a share of the responsibility for global security. The terrorist acts of Tuesday, 11 September, made us reflect on the principle of the indivisibility of international security on the basis of facts that lead to paradoxical conclusions.

The first is that any international actor that is sufficiently determined — and terrorist groups fall within that category — can inflict unacceptable damage on global security. Globalization merely magnifies the damage caused by such acts, which have claimed victims from many different nationalities. The cult of death as an instrument of power, contempt for law and a rejection of the simple definition of democracy offered by Karl Popper — a system that offers the possibility of change without bloodshed — are no justification for any cause.

Perhaps the most dangerous threats to global security are right before our eyes within the confines of a daily reality of conflict that the media transmit into the privacy of our own homes. There, the scenarios of real violence are less glamorous and less tragic than others that remain in the realm of the imagination. It might be prudent to take a just and balanced look at those conflicts and seek political solutions to them. And here we must stress once again that nothing justifies or could justify terrorist violence. Even so, any strategy to combat terrorism that fails to recognize it as a symptom of other more complex political, social and even cultural problems could degenerate into the pursuit of the effects of terrorism while overlooking the breeding grounds in which that phenomenon flourishes.

It is precisely for that reason, and as a consequence of the effective application of the principle of the indivisibility of international security, that we must at this painful time commit ourselves firmly to multilateralism, value it as the appropriate instrument for confronting any threats to global security and return with renewed and positive political will to the multilateral disarmament agenda.

If that is the result of our work during this session of the First Committee, we will have done a great service to the security of all mankind and we will have taken a giant step towards the eradication of all political folly.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish first of all, Sir, to congratulate you and your country, Hungary, on your well-deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are certain that your well known ability and experience will lead us to success. I assure you of my delegation's continuing full cooperation. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau. I wish further to thank the previous Chairman, Ambassador U Mya Than of Myanmar, for his signal contribution during the fifty-fifth session.

My delegation endorses the statement made on Monday by the Permanent Representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group, to which we are proud to belong.

As we consider disarmament and international security agenda items today, we cannot fail to think of the contemptible, criminal terrorist attacks of 11 September. Costa Rica categorically and firmly condemns those criminal, barbaric acts that are contrary to fundamental human values, and reiterates its heartfelt condolences to the United States and to all the other nations that fell victim to that tragedy.

There is an obvious link between terrorism and weaponry. To commit terrorist attacks, it is indispensable to possess weapons. The proliferation of arms stokes the fires of violence, fuels conflict and hatred and exacerbates criminality. Weapons are not merely a catalyst in armed conflict; they also constitute an obstacle to the peace process. The indiscriminate sale of weapons encourages and promotes political instability and the violation of human rights; these in turn give rise to demands within societies, which tend to be advanced through violence.

Fighting terrorism thus requires a new commitment to disarmament. We must explicitly prohibit the transfer of weapons to extremist, terrorist or rebel groups. We must also forbid the transfer of weapons to Governments that support or harbour terrorist groups, Governments that violate human rights and those that do not respect democratic principles. We must guarantee that properly authorized arms transfers are not diverted to illicit goals. To eradicate terrorism, it is essential to regulate civilian possession of light weapons.

In that connection, I cannot fail to mention the Programme of Action adopted at last July's United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. To be frank, my delegation was disappointed in the outcome of that conference. We are concerned that arms transfers to rebel groups were not prohibited; we are outraged that there was no condemnation of the transfer of arms to Governments that commit massive or systematic violations of human rights. We are alarmed too that it was not possible to adopt strong measures to regulate civilian possession of weapons. Recent events illustrate the lack of wisdom and vision demonstrated in the negotiations. But there is still time to correct those mistakes. We must begin to formulate a legally binding code of conduct regulating arms transfers, which would prevent the perpetration of further terrorist acts and the spawning of new armed conflicts.

In the medium and the long term, the quest for peace and security requires a substantial reduction in the number of available weapons. The weapons culture, in all its forms, runs counter to the principles of peace, security and development that must guide international relations in the modern world. The accumulation of weapons and ammunition poses a genuine obstacle to peace and a direct threat to the security of all truly peace-loving nations, such as mine.

Combating the use, abuse and proliferation of weapons requires the demilitarization of our societies and the development of a genuine culture of peace and life based on greater economic and social equality, the rule of law, democracy, representative government and respect for human rights.

Over the past 50 years, disarmament has been a central element of daily life in Costa Rica. Our country has no weapons and no army. We do not ensure our national security through the use of weapons. Quite the contrary: the sole guarantee of our security is the prohibition of the use of force, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations. We have entrusted our security to this Organization and multilateral mechanisms.

Cost Rica firmly supports the various efforts under way to eradicate definitively all types of weapons. We therefore endorse the conclusions of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Manufacturing and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and On Their Destruction, held in September last in Managua, Nicaragua.

We deem it necessary in particular for the international community to continue its support for demining programmes and for programmes to assist mine victims and to educate the populations at risk.

My country recognizes, and is itself a victim of, the threat posed by transnational crime to small and vulnerable countries. That is why we support the initiative of the Small Island States to eradicate criminal activities that threaten their stability and security. In particular, we support their initiative that the Caribbean be declared a zone of peace.

My delegation condemns in all circumstances the use, possession, threat of use and development of nuclear weapons. We believe that from an ethical, legal and strategic point of view, there is no rationale whatsoever for these instruments of mass destruction. No State has the right to endanger the survival of the human race. That is why we call on the nuclear-weapon States to make a genuine commitment to disarmament negotiations and to initiate a progressive and systematic process of dismantling of their arsenals.

We also urge those States not to transfer to other States any technology or materials that promote the development of nuclear weapons. We also reiterate our appeal to the nuclear Powers to exercise the greatest possible prudence in the handling of their nuclear arsenals in order to avoid new sources of tension or mistrust.

Along these lines, we remain concerned about that design and study of anti-missile defence systems. In this context, I am pleased to announce that on 25 September Costa Rica ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We appeal to all States that have not yet done so to do so promptly. We believe that the entry into force of this international instrument is an indispensable step towards ensuring the security of all humankind.

Costa Rica, as a member of the nuclear-weapon-free zone of Latin America established through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, firmly supports the creation and consolidation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, because we believe they make a positive contribution to global peace and security. In this respect, we fully support the Rio Group's communiqué on the transport of radioactive materials and dangerous waste products.

During our discussions in the Committee, we must bear in mind the multifaceted and positive relationship between disarmament and development. Reducing military expenditures is particularly important for developing countries. We have scant resources available to us, and we cannot mismanage them while maintaining armies that place a heavy burden on our budget.

Our national experience has demonstrated that not investing in arms is the best decision for countries genuinely committed to the well-being of their citizens. We therefore advocate that the resources that today are allocated to weapons throughout the world be redirected to promoting genuine, authentic economic and social development as well as genuine equity among all peoples.

Peace is not just the absence of armed conflict. Genuine peace is the fruit of harmony among the various sectors of society. Respectful relationships among individuals and among peoples and the rejection of violence and hatred.

Peace requires active solidarity among men and women, and that is why peace can exist only when we recognize that, as human beings, we all are members of the same family, and disarmament is only the first step in that direction.

Mr. Westdal (Canada): Mr. Chairman, congratulations on your election and on your conduct of the chairmanship of our Committee. We have worked under your leadership and under that of other Hungarian representatives in this field before, and we are grateful, confident and content to see your clear fidelity to its traditional high standards.

We are gathered in the shadow of massive tragedy — mass murder by people who think that they can cow us. Terrorism is not an act, but an effect. When we give in, the terrorists win. But far from terrorized, we are resolute. Stirred by tragedy, conscious that we are on the cusp of a new chapter in history, we will henceforth be vigilant, coherent and energetic in our fight against terrorism. Far from being divided, our nations are united, as never before, in the face of a common enemy.

I speak now of the meaning of our Committee's work, which my delegation draws from that dreadful day when this United Nations, this house of the whole world, bore the dust of death.

It is, in sum, our appreciation that there is new human unity on this earth; that we are all together seized with purpose and resolve by our shared imperative to destroy terrorism; that the fight enlists us all in multilateralism, with grave responsibility to make it work; that we must reinforce our defences against the dangers and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; that this Committee has a mandate and an agenda for deliberations full of relevance and urgent work in non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament; and that, in greater earnest than ever before, we need to get on with it.

We first relearn the great lesson that we are all one people, all part of a planetary civilization. On television, live, real-time, we have seen our vulnerability. The images shook the whole world as never before — and as one. But that very integrity, that oneness, is also our redeeming strength. That unity encompasses all nations and peoples, transcending regions, religions, and any and all divisions. It is the foundation for a new, deeper collective responsibility to make this a safer world.

The attacks and our response have been profoundly humanizing for the world community, evoking the very best of the human spirit in New York and far beyond, and confirming values and interests all here share. Ironically, the very last thing those terrorists would have wanted to do is give us all unity of spirit, purpose and resolve against them, but unity has been our first response to their atrocity. The attack and our common reaction are both milestones — one bloody, one brave.

The surge towards global human unity is palpable. It is also timely. For more than 50 years now, we have struggled to find ways to achieve that measure of global political coherence required to survive the grave risks posed by weapons of mass destruction, thermonuclear bombs foremost among them, whose blasts are thousands of times more powerful than those of 11 September — arsenals that could lead to human extinction. We do not yet know just which combination of global institutions and nation-States will achieve that end, nor just how that combination will be checked and balanced, but we do know that our new, deeper unity will help us gain that ground.

The second lesson we learn is that civilization, all of us — States, institutions, groups and individuals — must recognize and combat the common enemy we face in any group or person prepared to use the means of modern technology for mass murder.

Success will require much closer cooperation among States, without exception. As was made clear in the General Assembly's debate last week and in Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001), what has changed in our world is that anti-terrorism is now foremost on the agenda of all States.

We are all united and solemnly agreed now that no State anywhere, anytime, is any longer allowed to abide, abet, help or harbour terrorists plotting mass murder. Human unity is deepened with this purpose.

The third lesson we draw is that the vital interests of all States without exception lie in effective multilateralism. To protect ourselves, all of us, we need rules — and they need keeping. Vital to the protection of modern civilization, multilateral security institutions matter now more than ever before.

We have surely learned that no single nation, however powerful, can hope to ensure its security unilaterally. Given the stakes, we have also learned that, in the multilateral agreements and institutions we have built to protect our security, we can no longer pretend, make promises we do not keep or spout empty words. We need those institutions held to strict standards of legitimacy and effectiveness. They must earn their keep and add real value or be replaced with new means to get their jobs done.

In the fields of First Committee work, that means universal adherence to and full implementation of multilateral security treaties. It means transparency, verification and credible enforcement of arms pacts. It means strong nuclear safeguards and more resources for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It means more money for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). It means the actual elimination of stocks of weapons of mass destruction, including fissile materials. It means a stronger Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and action to counter the dangers in easily constructed radiological weapons, which spread radioactive material by conventional explosions. And it means robust export controls on weapons, related technology and dual-use items. It is a tall order, but the fact is that if we do nothing more than keep the promises we have already made and implement fully and rigorously the treaties we have already negotiated, we will have taken a major step forward.

It is also surely time to put the Conference on Disarmament back to work. In that institution, we have well-proven means to negotiate binding accords. Canadian and other Conference Presidents have done their utmost to spur Governments to joint action dealing with fissile material negotiations, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We have been very close to agreement on a programme of valuable work. The time has come to agree and get moving.

On reviewing the business of our Committee in the baleful light of horror, we learn our fourth lesson: that our agenda is full of global imperative, full of urgent relevance in non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. If the people, civil societies and Governments of the world, anxious now with compelling reason, cannot turn to this Committee to define and seek "security for all" — in the language of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — where can they turn? For urgent deliberation on danger clear and present to us all, they look to us. And they look to us to focus on a real agenda, on what matters to their security and safety. We have to establish priorities and allocate our time on the basis of the real merits of the various proposals before us.

The first priority, surely, is nuclear disarmament, the fulfilment of our solemn pledge to rid the world of nuclear weapons. We already have a template, the NPT plan of action — 13 practical steps agreed by all the parties to the NPT last year and endorsed by the General Assembly — and we have the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil it, along with a renewed promise of accountability. We need to protect those valuable assets and to use them in years to come to sustain the NPT's vital protections for us all. To strengthen the NPT's norm, we reiterate the call by the NPT Review Conference for those few States not yet party to the Treaty to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States.

That nuclear disarmament commitment applies to both horizontal and vertical proliferation of existing arsenals. It surely means no more nuclear weapons tests. We need neither further demonstrations nor further refinements of their catastrophic force. The moratorium on tests must endure and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) must come into force. Moreover, we need to make sure that stockpiles are secure and launch negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, with parallel attention to stocks, and we need to focus on tactical as well as strategic weapons. In sum, we need firm control of all nuclear weapons and materials; we need strict non-proliferation; and we need their incremental reduction and their ultimate elimination.

Through much of this year, we have been considering the adaptation of the global strategic framework to dynamic circumstances and emerging threats to stability and security. Throughout the debate and the consultations in which we have been involved, Canada has recognized the need for adaptation, while emphasizing the need to maintain, match or enhance the benefits of existing arrangements. If the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty is to be amended or replaced, it would be important that the new strategic framework make a comparably strong contribution to global security. We have also emphasized the protection of the existing rules-based non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regime, which has fostered the successful pursuit of global restraint and strategic stability for more than three decades. The principles at the base of that regime — transparency, verification, irreversibility and respect for treaty commitments — are as valid today as ever before.

Further in the same framework, we have emphasized the need to keep space free of weapons. Outer space remains the only environment where weapons are not present; hence the importance and urgency of preventative diplomacy to forestall an arms race in outer space by establishing a multilateral ban on space-based weapons.

We should consider with great care the geostrategic implications of missile defence deployment and, more generally, we must seek to adapt security frameworks in a way that

> "promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all", (*NPT/CONF.2000/28, vol. I, Part I, p. 15*)

to quote the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We must sustain a strategic framework in which peace radiates through multilateral security structures faithfully supported by all States.

Canada will chair the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) through the coming year. We fully subscribe to the MTCR's preventive approach to the clear dangers of missile proliferation and will devote great energy as its Chair to reach out to non-member States. We also strongly support the draft international code of conduct on missiles, originally crafted by the MTCR in consultation with non-members, but now independent of the Regime and released for consideration by the international community as a whole. The universalization of the draft code should take place through a transparent and inclusive negotiating process open to all States on the basis of equality. Finally, we support other initiatives designed to focus multilateral attention on missile issues in all their aspects, including the United Nations group of experts established earlier this year, of which Canada is a member.

We will also have before us texts on other weapons of mass destruction. In this context, like many other States parties, Canada had hoped that the Review Conference of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention later this year would be able to adopt a compliance protocol strengthening global norms against the possession of biological weapons through an effective multilateral instrument providing means to investigate allegations of non-compliance, to complicate and deter biological weapons proliferation and to reduce the risks of the weaponization of disease.

The potential linkages to terrorism are clear and disturbing. Unfortunately, the Ad Hoc Group has failed to report. The threat of biological weapons, though, equally unfortunately, has not disappeared. Indeed, our Governments face growing public concern. At the Review Conference, we will examine with great interest any and all proposals to serve our common, primary goal of reinforcing the Convention and preventing the possession and use of biological weapons.

As to chemical weapons, we have been heartened by the strength of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the demonstrated potential of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to ensure its effective implementation. In less than five years, the Convention's operations have proven the feasibility of stringent verification through detailed reporting and on-site monitoring. As well, stockpiles of chemical weapons are being destroyed. There is much more to be done, though, and it is ever more important that we eradicate stocks and ensure their strict control and security until they are destroyed. The OPCW's drive against chemical weapons obviously needs more funding. Moreover, some States have not adhered to the Convention yet. We need them all on board.

(*spoke in French*)

Finally, I address the weapons that have been doing the mass of the killing on Earth these last decades: small arms, as well as light weapons and anti-personnel mines and other conventional weapons that remain as explosive remnants long after conflicts have ended.

The tragedy of 11 September notwithstanding, small arms remain the weapons most commonly used by terrorists and other non-State perpetrators of mass violence. We need to improve our security by curbing the proliferation of small arms and reducing their numbers. We can start very well by implementing the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on small arms last July. While more could have been accomplished, the achievement was not negligible: the first global acceptance that small arms menace both international and human security and that Governments are responsible for solutions. To help keep the promises in that Programme, we count on the First Committee for impetus.

We know well that anti-personnel mines devastate the lives of individuals, communities and States. To counter the terror of these weapons, more than 120 States have now accepted the Ottawa Convention. With its comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines and its provisions for cooperation and assistance, the Convention has undoubtedly been a success, as underlined last month at the Third Meeting of States Parties, held, fittingly, in Nicaragua, one of the most mine-affected States in the Americas. The job, though, is far from done. Canada calls on all States — including the three permanent members of the Security Council that have not yet acceded to the Ottawa Convention — to join this common effort.

(*spoke in English*)

While the international community has done much to ameliorate the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel mines, our work to lessen the terror of war for civilian populations, for peacekeepers and for humanitarian workers should not stop there. We need to deal with other explosive remnants of war. At the conference late this year to review the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, we can find ways to prevent munitions from becoming unexploded ordnance in the first place, ways to clear infested terrain and ways to warn citizens of danger. Such essential progress is well within our grasp.

I close by affirming that in all settings and at every opportunity Canada will keep seeking a safer path forward. We shall be vigilant and active in all the security institutions in which we take part — from the First Committee to the Missile Technology Control Regime, from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the CTBT Organization, from NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to the G8, over which we will preside next year.

Canadians have fought and died for freedom before, and we shall fight again as need be for our freedom to cherish life here, now, on this still gorgeous earth.

Mr. Šepelák (Czech Republic): It is with special pleasure that I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Committee. Your task will not be an easy one, but I am convinced that you will manage the work entrusted you with all the diplomatic skills and qualities necessary for achieving the best possible result of our work. My delegation is committed to cooperating with you towards this end.

The Czech Republic aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries. Nevertheless, allow me to elaborate on some specific issues of special interest to my country.

My country, as was the whole international community, all peace-loving nations and people, was shocked and horrified by the most brutal and devastating terrorist acts in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on 11 September 2001. We resolutely condemn all forms of terrorism and express our profound solidarity with, and the deepest sympathy to, the United States and its people.

It is clear that the newly emerging perception of security risks and threats will influence our outlook on disarmament issues, primarily on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery. It will require us to further develop the relevant international mechanisms and legal instruments to prevent terrorists from obtaining, or even using, any kind of weapon of mass destruction. The Czech Republic, therefore, will support all efforts aimed at strengthening all international non-proliferation regimes, taking special account of non-State actors, and will execute responsible export policies on the national level.

The Czech Republic has always been a proponent of clear, practical and realistic steps in nuclear disarmament and supported measures aimed at the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We therefore believe that the achievements of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should not be lost, and we would like to highlight the importance of implementing the practical steps agreed to in the Final Document of that Conference. We renew our call for universal adherence to the Treaty, as well as for full compliance by all the States parties.

We also reaffirm our commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and hope that all States will maintain existing moratoriums on nuclear testing until the CTBT enters into force. We welcome the progress achieved in the ratification process and in the work of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organization, particularly in building the International Monitoring System. The Czech Republic continues to be actively involved in the development of the monitoring and communication networks.

In spite of tremendous effort and high aspirations, we have not succeeded in establishing the verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972. The Czech Republic was supportive of the compromise text of the draft of the verification protocol, but we view the outcome as a reflection of political reality. Now, as we consider other options, we should ensure that we do not lose what has been achieved. We believe that the mandate of the expert group remains in force and that we will be able to use the many elements of the draft verification protocol in our further work. We hope that the forthcoming Fifth Review Conference will give rise to new prospects for the credible verification of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Joint precautions against the danger of bio-terrorism must be accorded high priority.

The functioning of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), entrusted with the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), in general meets our expectations. In terms of its membership, the OPCW must become a truly universal institution and focus on verification activities. The current budgetary situation of the OPCW must not lead to, and in our view does not justify, any verification activity restrictions. The credibility of the Convention must not be undermined.

We are also seriously concerned about the increased risk of the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. Priority must be given to preventive measures aimed at developing an internationally recognized instrument regulating this area. In this regard, we strongly support efforts aimed at the finalization and universalization of the international code of conduct proposed by the Missile Technology Control Regime.

As I have already mentioned, we are of the view that the new situation will necessitate rethinking security concepts to ensure stability and security in the world. Any such concept will have to include the continuation of the disarmament process, arms control and non-proliferation. We also consider the strengthening of defence capacities against a potential attack to be an absolutely legitimate step that any Government can take. Given the complexity of the missile defence issue and its security impact on the world community, we support all efforts undertaken with a view to achieving an understanding between both parties to the anti-ballistic missile Treaty. The latest rounds of bilateral consultation between the United States and the Russian Federation have sparked hopes that it may be possible reach an agreement on a new strategic framework that will correspond to the latest developments in the global security situation.

Yet again, I must express our concern and disappointment at the continued political paralysis of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. We stress the importance of approving the programme of work so that negotiations can resume and the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum does not slip into irrelevance. In this connection, I would like to repeat our call for launching negotiations on substantive issues, particularly on the fissile material cut-off treaty. As for the expansion of the Conference, we maintain our interest in becoming a full-fledged member, and invite members of the Conference to act constructively on the enlargement issue.

Despite the justified increased focus on weapons of mass destruction and their non-proliferation, we should not lose sight of the issue of conventional weapons. The Czech Republic supports the eradication of illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons, in accordance with the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Although the document approved did not completely fulfil our expectations, it contains a whole range of measures that need to be implemented as early as possible, both at national and regional levels and on a global scale. The Czech Republic is prepared to cooperate and contribute to the follow-up process at the regional and the global levels by providing assistance and joining the discussions on additional instruments. It is clear that the political will of member States, a forthcoming approach and the unified interpretation of all provisions, as well as their consistent implementation, will be of crucial importance.

I would also like to voice the Czech Republic's support for the full implementation of the Ottawa Convention, which it ratified in 1999, as well as all final documents from the meetings of the States parties to the Convention. It is my pleasure to inform this forum that in June 2001 we completed the destruction of all stockpiled mines covered by the Ottawa Convention.

The Czech Republic will also do its best to achieve a positive outcome at the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to be held in December this year. Regarding the proposed agenda, we will give our support to all proposals that enhance the applicability of the CCW. We are especially ready to support proposals to extend the scope of the CCW to cover non-international armed conflict and to begin the process of considering how the CCW should deal with the issue of explosive remnants of war.

This Committee has a unique opportunity to address, in a multilateral fashion, the specific issues on its agenda. We believe that it is necessary to approach these topics from the overall perspective of a world that is changing rapidly because of political and economic, as well as technological, developments. All credible and efficient steps undertaken in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation must take these factors into consideration. This challenge lies ahead of us. The Czech Republic wants to play its part in building a safer world.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Allow me to offer my delegation's sincere congratulations to you, Sir, upon your well-deserved election to the Chair of the First Committee. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. We have full confidence in your ability to successfully steer the deliberations of the Committee, and you can count on my delegation's full support.

My delegation also appreciates the Secretary-General's report on various issues related to disarmament and international security, and we commend the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his thought-provoking introductory remarks at the beginning of the general debate.

Disarmament is central to promoting peace and stability, as well as giving peoples around the world peace of mind and a sense of security. Since public opinion is the driving force of public policy, ideally disarmament should have been a subject of debate and dialogue, from gossip circles to public forums, from informal clubs to negotiating tables, and from academia to the corridors of power. However, it is deeply disturbing that disarmament has slipped from our collective consciousness for some time, to our immense peril.

The 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States were a nerve-rattling wake-up call about the likely dangers that lie ahead. It is time for the international community to come out of its lull and re-energize and renew debates and dialogues to pursue disarmament as an integral part of the conscious effort to secure durable peace and security.

Tragically, no tangible progress has been made for some time in the field of disarmament. On the bilateral front, for instance, some of the agreements that have provided strategic global stability are under mortal threat of being demolished, and no new round of negotiations seems to be emerging on the horizon. Even START II is faltering due to lack of the requisite ratification. On the multilateral front, the euphoria consequent on the successful Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference in 2000 appears to have waned. The unequivocal undertaking of the declared five nuclear-weapon States to nuclear disarmament still remains to be matched by action. Most dishearteningly, the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating forum in this area, has failed for the last few years even to agree on a programme of work, let alone make any progress in conducting fruitful negotiations.

Non-proliferation is now overshadowing disarmament. Even in this area progress has been much too slow. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), despite 161 countries signing and 82 ratifying it, lacks sufficient ratification, as 13 out of 44 countries that must ratify it before it comes into effect have not done so. Two of the five nuclear Powers also have yet to ratify the Treaty. The Treaty's coming into force still seems remote.

My delegation believes that, while non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is important in the short run to prevent their falling into the wrong hands, we must pursue their elimination as our ultimate goal. Such weapons have given us a cold war. They might give us a hot war and a cold peace, but durable and calm peace will not be possible until they have been totally eradicated.

Therefore, we urge the nuclear-weapon States to implement the 13 steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and match their commitments with deeds by eliminating their nuclear arsenals as per article VI of the NPT. We also ask all States whose ratification is required for the CTBT to come into effect to ratify it without delay. The strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention and ensuring the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention ought to be pressed forward equally vigorously.

The Conference on Disarmament must be activated and given the important task, among other things, of negotiating an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as a fissile material cut-off treaty.

My delegation believes that outer space must remain free of weapons. Deeper bilateral cuts in weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear arms, will be necessary to ensure broad-based negotiations to eliminate them. We therefore ask the nuclear-weapon States with the highest number of weapons in their possession to engage in bilateral negotiations to reduce their stockpiles substantially, and we encourage broad-based negotiations at the earliest.

Small arms and light weapons have become the principal tools of killing, mostly of innocent people, in the hands of non-State actors. Nepal would have liked to see a prohibition on the sale of arms to non-State actors and a restriction on the possession of concealable weapons by civilians included in the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held earlier this year. Yet we take solace in the fact that the Conference agreed to take measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in these categories of weapons, and hope that controlling small arms is a work in progress.

Before concluding, let me briefly touch upon the relocation of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to Kathmandu, where it belongs, pursuant to resolution 42/39 D. I profoundly appreciate all our friends for their consistent support and encouragement in the past in this regard. I am now happy to report that, following resolution 55/34 H, His Majesty's Government of Nepal decided on 2 July 2001 to bear the annual operational cost of the Regional Centre once it has moved to Nepal. An appropriate office building has already been identified in Kathmandu. We have also informed the United Nations Secretariat that, following its advice, Nepal is ready to sign a new host country agreement and the letters to be exchanged.

In view of this development, my delegation will introduce in the First Committee a draft resolution urging the Secretary-General to ensure the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu not later than a couple of months from now. I believe we will have, as in the past, full cooperation from all delegations for the adoption of the draft resolution.

Ms. Bohlen (United States): Before I begin, please accept my congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident — and my colleagues share my confidence — that the skill, experience, and knowledge that you and the Bureau bring to First Committee deliberations will assist us in a successful conclusion to our endeavours. I would also like to express my appreciation for the moment of silence observed by the Committee at its second meeting, on 4 October 2001.

We convene during a solemn period for humanity. Just four weeks ago a horrendous attack was carried out against this city and the international community. In addition to several thousand Americans, hundreds of citizens from 80 different nations lost their lives at the hands of a well-organized group of terrorists who showed total disdain for the innocents who suffered and perished. The world was shocked and appalled by these criminal events. The depravity of those acts, the tragic loss of life and the horrifying destruction mark that day forever as a sad chapter in human history. We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of sympathy that came to us from all over the world and for the solidarity shown by the international community in undertaking the long struggle now just beginning to bring the perpetrators to account and to fight terrorism wherever it manifests itself with all the weapons at our disposal.

The events of 11 September and the continuing concerns we all share underscore the need to take a fresh look at the international community's traditional convictions and approaches to security. We must strengthen them where appropriate, but we must also consider new ways to reduce the terrorist threat to mankind.

Responsible Governments must assure the security and safety of their citizens and of civil society as a whole. We are not free to stand aside and watch our citizens be slaughtered, nor can we tolerate international aggression or other forcible assaults on key interests and values. Criminals and terrorists who possess the means to threaten society, and who have shown no reluctance to use them, are a danger to us all and threaten the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament. Governments throughout the world must cooperate and devote appropriate energy and resources to finding them, bringing them to justice and rooting out the organized networks that enable them to operate.

There is intense concern that some of these terrorists and criminals may continue to seek to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. This gives the international community important and persuasive reasons to redouble our non-proliferation and arms control efforts. We must also strengthen other mechanisms intended to ensure that toxic and dangerous materials remain under appropriate control and are used solely for legal and constructive purposes. The United States Government is actively examining these questions, and we would welcome ideas and views of others on how best to achieve these goals. We hope to enlist the help of all the Members of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism and the threats posed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Delegations to the First Committee have come here to consider issues of disarmament, arms control and international peace and security. We will consider resolutions that focus on ways and means to reduce the potential harm to mankind from the tools of war, from small arms to weapons of mass destruction. We will not always agree on the best ways to reduce these dangers, but we can exchange insights, discuss alternate approaches and seek to persuade each other.

Let me begin by reiterating and emphasizing the strong support of the United States for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As a nuclear-weapon State, the United States understands its special responsibility under article VI to take steps related to nuclear disarmament. President Bush has made clear that the United States will reduce its nuclear forces to the lowest possible level that is compatible with the security of the United States and its allies.

Parties to the NPT and United Nations Member States, including the United States, have repeatedly called for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty to end the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We are extremely disappointed that the continuing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament is preventing the start of these negotiations. We urge all members of the Conference to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty without further delay.

The United States is keenly aware of the dangers we face in today's global environment. Earlier this year my Government began a strategic policy review that is beginning to bear fruit. As one example, members are aware that the United States Government and the Government of the Russian Federation have been intensively discussing a new strategic framework. This framework will be premised on openness, mutual confidence and real opportunities for cooperation. It will reflect a clean and clear break from the cold war. It will also include substantial reductions in offensive nuclear forces, cooperation on missile defence, enhanced non- and counter-proliferation efforts and measures to promote confidence and transparency.

In this context, I must reiterate that the United States is firmly opposed to the United Nations inserting itself into issues regarding the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which remains a matter for the parties. As I just noted, discussions between the Russian Federation and my country on a new strategic framework, including a revised approach to the ABM Treaty, have intensified in recent months and they will continue. In these circumstances it seems to us even more inappropriate for the ABM Treaty to be dealt with here in this forum. If a resolution on the ABM Treaty is introduced again this year, the United States will again vote no on it. We urge our friends and allies to do the same. Today's world provides both new threats and new opportunities. We must be able to react to these changes.

Let me emphasize, however, that the United States is committed to working constructively with all members of the international community to develop broad support for an effective agenda to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to ensure meaningful arms control. It is not just two or three nations that are threatened in today's world; the entire globe faces security challenges. We are prepared to work together in search of common ground, but we do not want to engage activities that would undercut genuine efforts to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction and address other very real security threats.

Unspeakable though the acts of 11 September were, they unfortunately do not exhaust the full range of deadly weapons available to a determined and merciless terrorist. Much has been written in recent weeks about the threat of the use of biological weapons and about the dangers of toxins and biological agents being dispersed in areas with large concentrations of people. While the ease of resorting to such weapons is sometimes overestimated in the press, the possibility that biological weapons might be used on a massive scale must now, after 11 September, be regarded as less remote than before.

This possibility must give new urgency to our efforts to combat the threat of biological weapons — and by weapons I mean here biological agents used with lethal intent. A first step must be to strengthen the norms against use of biological weapons, to make clear and doubly clear that this form of terrorism, like all others, is unacceptable. We believe that the international community, which has in Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) so clearly stated its resolve to combat terrorism by all the means at its disposal, must equally clearly state that any use of biological weapons — whether by a State, an organization or an individual — would be a crime against humanity to which the international community will respond. We must also make clear that the transfer of biological weapons and other toxins to those who would use them is similarly unacceptable.

Over the past six years, the United States and many other countries have sought to negotiate in Geneva a protocol that would strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) — that is, to give force to its prohibitions against possession, development, stockpiling and acquisition. Last July, the United States made clear that it could not support the proposed protocol, because the measures that were proposed to enforce the ban against possession and development were neither effective nor equitable — and given the inherent properties of biological products, it seems all but certain, in our view, that they can never be made so. This continues to be our view.

But in addition, the events of 11 September have reinforced our view that the focus must be on use. The international community must here and now state its abhorrence of use; we must all strengthen our national laws criminalizing use and transfer; and we must all agree that use and transfer are crimes to which our many mutual treaties of extradition would apply. We must give ourselves the means to question and challenge in the event of suspected use.

And we must be able to distinguish an outbreak of illness caused by biological weapons from a naturally occurring illness. And in the unthinkable event that a major biological weapon incident occurs somewhere, we need to pool, as much as we can, our knowledge and expertise to minimize the effects. That is why the United States is working closely with many nations to improve our common preparedness to mitigate and respond to biological weapon attacks, and why we intend to expand this cooperation, especially in the area of medical consequence management.

The United States is also fully engaged in international efforts against chemical weapons. Our goals remain the worldwide destruction of existing stocks of chemical weapons and full compliance with the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of these weapons of mass destruction. We are also assisting the Russian Federation in its stockpile destruction program. We note that it is not only chemical-weapons activities that are of concern. In Japan, terrorists made and used nerve gas. It is essential that Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) member States put in place national laws and other regulations that help to keep materials for making chemical weapons out of unauthorized hands and ensure effective prosecution of those who make or use chemical weapons.

Each of us must do all he can to control the export from our countries of sensitive goods and technologies related to weapons of mass destruction.

This effort remains essential if we are to prevent the spread of these weapons, not only to Governments that would use such weapons against others but to terrorists as well. Improvements in border controls and monitoring will also help in this effort.

The conclusions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference included several measures related to curtailing the potential risk of terrorism involving nuclear material. Among such steps are the strengthening of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, revising the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, improving national standards of security and physical protection of nuclear material, establishing stronger regulatory control over radioactive sources and enhancing international cooperation against illicit trafficking in nuclear material. These measures will address not only concerns about nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists, but also the threats to health and life posed by indiscriminate dispersal of radioactive materials. Improving the security and safety of civil nuclear installations against sabotage is also an important step.

The United States takes seriously its obligations under the arms control agreements to which we are a party. We lead the way in assisting foreign nations to counter the proliferation of deadly technology. We are prepared to engage in negotiations that will result in greater peace and security for the international community. We are fully aware of the consequences to our security and that of the international system arising from the changing nature of the threats posed in today's world. The United States delegation will examine carefully the resolutions, which are to be tabled over the coming days, taking into account the need to ensure our own security as we pursue arms control and disarmament objectives that can enhance security for all. And all nations should craft their proposals bearing in mind the real threat to our security that the events of 11 September so horribly demonstrated.

The world has changed, but many basic issues continue to command our attention and effort. The members of this body have a responsibility to address challenges to international security, both existing and new, and my delegation is ready to work with you and our counterparts.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.6

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee
6th meeting
Thursday, 11 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös .... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): May I, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are very pleased at seeing a representative of the Group of Eastern European States in charge of the work of the First Committee. You can rely on our full support and cooperation.

The tragic events of 11 September have shocked the world community. Our delegation, representing a nation that lost nearly one third of its sons and daughters in the Second World War, extends its condolences to the Government of the United States, the American people and the relatives of those who perished during the terrorist attacks. The September tragedy clearly demonstrated the new challenges and threats of the twenty-first century and the clear links that exist between the problems of international security, disarmament and terrorism.

It is necessary to ensure strict control over existing stockpiles of both weapons of mass destruction and their components and conventional weapons. The implementation by States of their obligations in the field of international security and disarmament — and above all those under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) — is becoming a key factor. In this connection, the delegation of the Republic of Belarus reaffirms its commitment to fulfilling its international obligations under all international multilateral disarmament and arms control agreements, including those in the field of weapons of mass destruction.

The compromise on nuclear disarmament issues achieved at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has provided the international community with a clear vision of the steps that need to be taken in the near future, including next year at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) should also enter into force as soon as possible. Our delegation attaches particular importance to ensuring the universality of this Treaty, and believes that it is extremely important for the Conference to be held in November 2001 on facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT to succeed.

Belarus, as a State that voluntarily rejected the opportunity to continue to possess nuclear weapons and which completed the withdrawal of such weapons from its territory in 1997, is convinced that it is necessary to provide legally binding assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. At the same time, we welcome the unilateral declarations made by nuclear-weapon States with respect to their policies, whereby they would give

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up the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Belarus continues to fully observe its international obligations under agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament. In February 2001, the final inspection under the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF) took place in Belarus. That confirmed our country's strict observance of all the Treaty's provisions. The Treaty has played a significant role in reducing the military threat and strengthening strategic stability, peace and international security.

The Republic of Belarus is pursuing a responsible policy in the area of exports control. The admission of our country to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, in the year 2000, is proof of our country's full compliance with internationally recognized norms in the area of exports control.

Preserving and strictly complying with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) are the most important components in maintaining the strategic stability that drives the global disarmament processes. Deploying a national anti-ballistic missile defence system in violation of the ABM Treaty will undermine the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime and will affect in the most adverse way the entire system of global strategic stability that has taken decades to form.

Another extremely important issue is the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. The Conference on Disarmament should begin negotiations on this problem as soon as possible. The earliest possible establishment of a subsidiary body at the Conference on Disarmament will make it possible to fully focus on the consideration of this issue in all its aspects.

Belarus believes that nuclear disarmament should be complemented by practical steps aimed at strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, including by consolidating and setting up new nuclear-weapon-free zones. We continue to believe that the initiative of Belarus to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe is extremely important to the promotion of regional and global security and stability. We are convinced that the time will come when this initiative will become a reality. The delegation of Belarus intends to continue to seek agreement on this issue, including at the current session of the General Assembly. Belarus is open to cooperation on this issue with all of the States in the region and with other Member States of the United Nations.

Belarus is convinced that practical measures aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament could determine the entire course of agreed actions undertaken by the international community in the field of nuclear disarmament. The nuclear threat should be reduced through consistent step-by-step disarmament measures, with the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons as a final goal.

The Republic of Belarus has been pursuing a responsible and consistent policy aimed at fulfilling its international obligations, including those under the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE). Having eliminated — despite extreme economic and financial hardships — nearly 10 per cent of all the heavy military equipment designated for destruction under the Treaty, Belarus has made a significant contribution to the strengthening of regional and global trust and cooperation. Belarus was also the first State member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to have ratified the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe in 2000. The consistency of our policies was also reaffirmed by our ratification of the Open Skies Treaty in 2001.

Belarus supports the extension of transparency measures on armaments and military expenditure. Of special importance is broad participation by all Member States in the United Nations standardized reporting instrument on military expenditure, which would help ease international tension, strengthen confidence among States and promote the conclusion of specific agreements in the field of disarmament. Consistent with that position, Belarus regularly submits data to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Belarus is convinced that a gradual movement from simple to more complex bilateral and multilateral measures and agreements will create a solid basis for preventing armed conflict and strengthening national and regional security, which in turn are integral elements of the modern architecture of a comprehensive and indivisible system of international security. The formulation of a wide-ranging set of confidence-building measures under the aegis of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe could serve as an efficient model for successful interaction among States with differing approaches and views.

Belarus attaches particular importance to the formulation of bilateral confidence-building measures; we view this as a foreign-policy priority. We have been conducting successful and productive discussions with our neighbours on these and other specific problems of regional security.

The Republic of Belarus welcomed the July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the adoption of its final document: the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Belarus shares the concerns of the majority of members of the international community, which regard the illicit trade and smuggling of small arms and light weapons as one of the major factors facilitating the proliferation of international terrorism and local armed conflicts. We believe that the illicit proliferation and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons pose a real threat to regional and international peace and security. In our view, only more efficient national, regional and global measures regulating various aspects of the problem of small arms and light weapons can help break the vicious cycle of problems related to the illicit proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons. The Republic of Belarus will take all necessary steps to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Republic of Belarus supports the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. Our country does not produce anti-personnel landmines. In 1995, the Republic of Belarus joined the de facto international moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. That moratorium has been extended by Belarus through the end of 2002.

Lacking the necessary financial and technological resources, the Republic of Belarus at present is not ready to join the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, but has been considering the possibility of joining the Convention in future in the context of possible international financial and technological assistance in demining and in the elimination of stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines. The Republic of Belarus is ready to start cooperation on demining and stockpile elimination activities with all interested parties and welcomes any related proposals and initiatives.

In conclusion, I would like to express our hope that the international community will be able to develop reliable mechanisms to confront new types of risks and threats to our common security.

Mr. Pearson (New Zealand): Let me convey to you, Sir, my congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee. You have the full support of New Zealand in the pursuit of what we hope will be a productive session.

The appalling atrocities that took place only a few weeks ago in this city and in this country have been roundly condemned. The New Zealand Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Helen Clark, described them as a "a war against civilization". Terrorism in any shape or form will never succeed. We condemn it unequivocally. New Zealand is resolved to work with others in preventing such unspeakable acts and to punish those who are responsible.

In a world which increasingly faces unpredictable and asymmetric threats to international security — whether terrorism, computer hacking or germ warfare — multilateral machinery to confront them is more vital than ever. This makes the work of this Committee even more relevant.

New Zealand has consistently sought to push the disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation agenda forward. We remain determined in this endeavour. However, as we review progress this year, we find ourselves once again with too little to be optimistic about. The inventory of unfinished business in many areas remains far too large.

We have to address this credibility gap if our multilateral structures are to remain relevant in delivering security benefits. No disarmament instrument is yet universal. There is underperformance in compliance and implementation, and once more this year the successes we have secured are offset by some significant setbacks.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is not in sight; the negotiations to conclude a compliance protocol on biological weapons were inconclusive; we are no further ahead in negotiating a ban on fissile production; the Conference on Disarmament has again failed to deal with nuclear disarmament; the Chemical Weapons Convention is not universal in all regions; and the START process seems to have come to a halt.

The security landscape is changing before our eyes. Unilateral tendencies are evident, and new strategic bargains are being canvassed. There are calls for a new security framework. A shakeup of institutionalized disarmament diplomacy may be occurring. There may be a risk of power politics pushing others to the margins, which could prompt exactly the wrong response. Those of us who are determined to advance the multilateral agenda find our objectives constantly frustrated.

We have no difficulty in addressing changing realities; on the contrary, New Zealand welcomes the move away from a cold-war mindset. But in the push for change, we must not endanger the gains we have made so far, and we must ensure that what we have got is in working order. Change and consolidation need not be mutually exclusive options.

New Zealand regrets that the negotiations to develop a compliance mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) failed this year to agree on a draft protocol. Evidence of non-compliance with the Convention's prohibitions in the past, or difficulties with the parameters of the subject, should not lead ipso facto to the conclusion that a compliance protocol is of limited value. We should instead focus our attention clearly on the real need: effective compliance machinery that will make it harder for proliferators to cheat or for terrorists to go undetected and unchecked.

Unilateral and plurilateral measures to deal with these types of threats, such as bio-defence programmes, are essential and consistent with the implementation of the Convention. But the bio-warfare threat also requires broad collective responses from all who subscribe to the norm. It is important that we demonstrate leadership to strengthen the Convention's prohibitions.

Squabbling fruitlessly over the past at the next Review Conference of the BWC in November will not take us forward. It should be the time for fresh thinking "outside the box" to address non-compliance concerns in an effective manner. New Zealand continues to believe that measures to strengthen the Convention are possible, and we consider that the Ad Hoc Group's mandate remains valid as a basis for doing this.

We had another conspicuous failure this year in the Conference on Disarmament. It seems to have lost its way and its purpose. The Conference has not adapted to today's world. The group structures that operate within it not only perpetuate the rigidities of another time, but also enable some to take cover from accountability.

The Conference's mandate as the sole forum for negotiations on disarmament has been challenged. The Conference's claim to be multilateral is fundamentally flawed. The assumption that only a limited number of countries are capable of determining global negotiating priorities and outcomes is nonsense. The Conference on Disarmament should be open to all countries who are seeking to engage in disarmament and non-proliferation.

We cannot realistically hold the institution itself as being responsible for its failure, however. Accountability rests with its member Governments, and political realities outside the Conference determine what it can substantively achieve, of course. Yet it is regrettable that its prolonged failure to engage does not seem to cause any real concern in some capitals.

The negotiating options before the Conference on Disarmament have become interlinked, whether we like it or not. Assertions of symmetry in its programme of work have served to cement the deadlock. A new approach to its programme of work — one that does not seek to be so prescriptive in the mandates — should be tested. The priority should be to establish the subsidiary bodies, but to leave it to them to determine what they will address and the modalities of their mandates, whether it be through deliberations or negotiations. There are no risks in this option, since the Conference is already so scrupulous in the exercise of consensus.

We were pleased that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was successful earlier this year. The Programme of Action is no modest achievement. Unfortunately, there was no agreement to include measures dealing with some aspects of the legal trade of these ubiquitous killers where they impinge on illicit transfers. Prohibiting or restricting supply to non-State actors was also excluded. But it was an important outcome nevertheless. Perhaps most important, it has delivered a framework within which the international community can orient itself and work towards its non-proliferation goals — from the global level right down to the local.

We must be careful that this process does not become an end in itself, however. Closer partnership between Governments and civil society would be a useful corrective to process-driven tendencies and would keep us focused on the task at hand. Reducing the appalling body count inflicted on civilians by military-style weapons must remain uppermost.

The Ottawa mine ban Convention stands out as a uniquely successful humanitarian and disarmament endeavour so far. The process began with more than its fair share of doubters and detractors. But central to its success has been an organic sense of common purpose around which most operational and organizational questions revolve, and are resolved, with a minimum of fuss, by multilateral standards. A tangible sense of purpose has been forged between north and south, between developing and developed, between Governments and non-governmental organizations. It has become a true coalition of the willing.

This is not to say that it lacks significant problems to overcome if it is to be effective over the long term in achieving a mine-free world. At least 50 countries have not yet joined the mine ban Convention. The treaty has still to test its procedures for fact-finding and clarification in cases of possible non-compliance and it will need to remain resolute in addressing longer-term issues of victim assistance and the reintegration into society of mine victims. The can-do dynamic among the Convention's partners, however, is a pertinent reminder to the international community and to pessimists everywhere that leadership in disarmament can be a potent and positive force, and it is also a reminder of the power of collective will.

The first year of this century has continued to witness appalling violations of the laws of war. Many of these have been inflicted in internal conflicts, often by non-State actors, rather than in conventional State-to-State conflict. The Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in Geneva this December will be the opportunity to tackle this. Before it are proposals to expand the scope of the treaty and its Protocols to internal conflicts. New Zealand is strongly behind them.

The international community must also address the problem of explosive remnants of war. They kill or maim many thousands of people each year. There is scope here for tightening up the restrictions on the use of certain weapons, especially cluster sub-munitions. We need to ensure that they are stringently consistent with the principles of the 1949 Geneva Convention Protocol on the protection of civilians as well as of the CCW itself. And attention needs to be focused on realistic methods of exchange of technical information, warnings to civilians and post-conflict clearance activities on a broad range of unexploded munitions.

Industry-driven improvements to munitions or fusing design, while attractive, will never be enough. Our strong preference is for a legally binding instrument on explosive remnants of war, if necessary after an expert process to explore appropriate modalities, and we want this to be ready for signature before the next CCW Review Conference in 2006. Time is of the essence here.

It has been a challenging year for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Financial and housekeeping problems have, unfortunately, diverted attention from implementation. Despite this, implementation is, on the whole, proceeding well with the treaty's highly professional inspectorate. Verification activities are continuing as best they can under the circumstances. The deadly legacy of chemical facilities needs to dismantled and destroyed as soon as possible to enhance international confidence in the global ban.

As we confront new asymmetrical global threats, the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) becomes even more pivotal in underpinning and enhancing international security. The Agency's safeguards are an indispensable component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and its verification role can only become more central to our efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The safekeeping of radioactive materials, especially those with the potential to be used for nuclear weapons, has never been more important. The possible impact of terrorism on the security of nuclear material is too shocking to contemplate. The work of the IAEA has thus never been of greater importance and New Zealand's support for it is unwavering.

Last year, we had a sense of optimism about the prospects for forward momentum on nuclear disarmament. The new undertakings agreed at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) provide the contemporary blueprint for action in a way that ensures international security. Of singular significance was the unequivocal undertaking to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Last year, our heads of Government, in endorsing that outcome, were resolved to keep all options open on eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

A year later, it is difficult to identify progress in the implementation of these agreed undertakings on nuclear disarmament. Implementation will take time. New Zealand is realistic about that. We welcome the indications of further cuts that have been given by the United States and the Russian Federation, but when we look for evidence of a wider determination to move forward, it is difficult to find.

The test, as we approach the NPT review cycle next year, will be in delivery and accountability. Moving to the total elimination of nuclear weapons must become operative policy. Presumptions that these weapons can be retained indefinitely are not sustainable, nor are they compatible with the unequivocal undertaking to achieve total elimination. New Zealand and its New Agenda partners are determined to ensure that the NPT undertakings are taken forward. Our Foreign Ministers made this clear earlier this week.

A crucial step along the way is the CTBT. A Conference to promote the entry into force of the CTBT is to be held soon. It is a Conference we wish had not been necessary. We have all invested so much effort over the years in this Treaty. It is deeply disappointing that it has not entered into force five years after it was opened for signature.

The CTBT will contribute to international peace and security in unmistakable ways. By creating an international norm prohibiting all nuclear test explosions in all environments, the Treaty will make a significant contribution towards the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and provide impetus to the process of the total elimination of these weapons of mass destruction. Ratifying the CTBT is one critically important step that all States could take to underline their commitment to promoting our common security.

Interpretations of strategic stability have come into even sharper focus. Those suggesting that Tuesday 11 September was the day the world changed are correct. At a time when threats to our security are becoming asymmetrical, disarmament and non-proliferation are more, not less relevant and action against non-State entities must be strengthened in States-based frameworks.

Our multilateral machinery has to be in full working order if we are going to deal successfully with these uncertainties and we must not loose sight of our real objective: to deliver on disarmament. Recent events have demonstrated that international security is a collective concern and a collective responsibility. Collective engagement remains absolutely fundamental.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems impacts on all of us ultimately and we all have a stake in international security. In determining strategic stability, we must be careful not to misappropriate it to conceal procrastination on disarmament and non-proliferation. Implementation of the agreed NPT steps on nuclear disarmament should be a major determinant in achieving international security. We believe it is essential at this time to exercise great caution in decisions that could impact negatively on disarmament and non-proliferation endeavours. Change must go hand in hand with consolidation.

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Chairman, I am particularly pleased to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. Your personal virtues and your great professionalism assure us of success in our work.

Ecuador fully adheres to the statement made by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group.

The need to maintain international peace and security is not new; from its very beginnings, humankind has struggled to achieve these goals. In the last century, the Hague conferences and the League of Nations made advances in this struggle. But it is the United Nations and its Charter that made the maintenance of international peace and security their fundamental mission.

Conspiring against peace are armed conflicts, whether national or international in nature, in which women and children are the most adversely affected and the greatest victims of conflict's harmful effects. Security, however, is closely related to the political, economic and social conditions existing in States. The scope of the issue of peace and security has broadened to include not only military factors but also non-military factors such as hunger, disease, ignorance, violence and terrorism.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September perpetrated against the United States of America, which my country condemns and deplores, have once more been rejected by the international community and should spur us to a more profound reflection on the threats in today's world to international peace and security, on their origins and destructive capacity, as well as on the measures the United Nations should adopt jointly to achieve its noble aims, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter.

The work of the First Committee, essentially dedicated to the study of issues related to disarmament and international security, must make a substantial contribution in dealing adequately with the delicate current situation. The fight against all forms of terrorism is directly linked, among other issues, to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. All of these issues are part of our agenda.

In this forum, Ecuador has been a permanent advocate of the need to respect and strengthen multilateral agreements on the eradication, reduction and limitation of armaments.

At every opportunity, Ecuador has reaffirmed its commitment to the cause of disarmament. That is why Ecuador has been part of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons from its beginning and actively participated in the creation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which declared all of Latin America to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This past August, Ecuador assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. My country's leadership in this honourable post will be oriented by the unwavering principles of its foreign policy on the subject. Despite the paralysed state of the activities of that important body, the snares can be overcome if there exists the political will to make progress.

Disarmament and the prevention of conflicts are two sides of the same problem. If possible conflicts are resolved in time by pacific means, the States involved have no reason to embark on an arms race. As well, disarmament becomes easier when solutions come through dialogue, the necessary negotiations and agreements, as well as through the adoption of confidence-building measures.

At the start of the twenty-first century, we must not encourage a new arms race, whose risks for international security are obvious, and whose cost would be offensive to nations fighting for the eradication of extreme poverty and the development of their peoples. A resumption of nuclear testing would leave the door open for other nuclear-weapon States and States so aspiring to follow that example and end the process of disarmament and the non-proliferation regime, which was constructed over long years of patient negotiations.

As I indicated earlier, today, threats to international security are of a very different nature. Protracted conflicts without hope of a just and lasting solution, extreme poverty, terrorism, drug trafficking and transnational crime must be dealt with through all legal means and international cooperation. Growing development and the well-being of peoples, democracy and the great values of humanity must have real meaning for the vast majority of people, who live in poverty. Social justice, respect for human rights and better opportunities of employment and production in the developing world will decisively contribute to the genuine strengthening of international security, stability and the consolidation of democracy and its fundamental freedoms.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is directly linked to social, economic and humanitarian problems caused by the domestic civil confrontations and international conflicts, as well as by the ruthless action of organized crime, especially that of terrorism and drug traffickers. The implementation of the Programme of Action resulting from the Conference on small arms and light weapons held last July in New York would undoubtedly be a positive step in the process of strengthening domestic and international security.

On the subject of anti-personnel mines, I want to express our satisfaction that Ecuador has complied with the obligations contracted in the Ottawa Convention and has achieved the proposed goal of possessing no stockpiled mines by the time of the convening of the third meeting of States parties to the Convention, held recently in Managua. In the first stage and by its own efforts, Ecuador destroyed 101,458 anti-personnel mines by August of this year and on 11 September, proceeded to destroy an additional total of 154,344 mines, thanks to foreign assistance channelled through the Organization of American States.

The central goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control is still far from having been achieved. Huge arsenals of nuclear weapons still exist, despite the fact that in 1996 the International Court of Justice issued its Advisory Opinion that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was unlawful and that there was an obligation to negotiate their complete elimination — an obligation acknowledged by the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

We are witnessing new approaches to strategic defence doctrines, as well as the updating of such doctrines, which in and of itself increases international insecurity. Furthermore, it has not been possible to reach consensus on the draft protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. The States that must become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty have still not done so. Disarmament should concern all countries, and not simply those that have already disarmed.

For the United Nations and all its Member States, it is therefore crucial to continue the campaign to stop the arms race in all its aspects, promote a genuine disarmament process on the basis of international agreement, increase confidence between States and ease international tension.

Mr. Orlando Requeijo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship and to assure you of the full support of the delegation of Cuba. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and take this opportunity to request the delegation of Myanmar to convey to Ambassador Mya Than our gratitude for his excellent work last year.

The work of our Committee, and of the fifty-sixth session in general, has begun under very unusual circumstances. The upheaval caused by the terrorist attacks of 11 September has had an impact on all of us. Cuba reiterates its absolute condemnation of such acts, and reaffirms its solidarity with the people of the United States. At the same time, we are convinced that military action cannot provide a solution to this very grave problem. On the contrary, the bombing of Afghanistan by the United States will lead only to a cycle of violence and result in the deaths of an incalculable number of innocent victims, as is now becoming evident.

In order to combat terrorism, we must undertake an international cooperation effort under the leadership of the United Nations, not engage in war. In response to a request from the Secretary-General, on 4 October the National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba decided to ratify our country's accession to the 12 existing international conventions on terrorism. As the Secretary-General has said, only the United Nations can give global legitimacy to the long-term fight against terrorism.

Many of those who were most optimistic 10 years ago, when it was fashionable to say that the cold war had come to an end, cannot now hide their scepticism. We are still a long way from the global peace, stability and cooperation that was expected to materialize after the supposed end of the cold war. The emergence of a unipolar world, in which only one super-Power has the military capacity to enable it to dominate the international scene, has not brought greater security for most of us — quite the opposite.

Instead of more resources being devoted to development, military spending is rising quickly again. No one could deny that, with only a part of the almost $80 billion spent annually on the military, we could meet the needs of the more than 1.3 billion people who live in extreme poverty.

The problems of underdevelopment, hunger and disease, among others, which affect the vast majority of the countries of the world, cannot be solved with bombs. Of course, we must control small arms and light weapons so as to avoid the terrible humanitarian consequences of their unbridled proliferation. No one opposes the prohibition of the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines. At the same time, however, we wonder when real steps will be taken to prevent some countries from continuing to develop and use arms that are becoming increasingly deadly and sophisticated. Such weapons are not much discussed, and are almost never referred to in the resolutions that we approve every year, yet they are the weapons that cause the so-called collateral damage — a term devised to obscure the fact that death and injury are being inflicted on innocent people. When will we adopt an international agreement to eliminate nuclear weapons from the face of the earth?

It is strange that some question the fact that achieving nuclear disarmament should be an absolute priority task, at a time when more than 30,000 nuclear weapons are still in existence, endangering the very existence of humankind.

Despite the fact that the outcome of the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) prompted some to believe at the time that the most important result had been achieved, in reality it is clear that that was not the case. Time goes by without any concrete action being taken to fulfil the commitment of moving towards nuclear disarmament. Indeed, the contrary is true: we have witnessed actions that completely go against the obligations assumed.

For many countries, including Cuba, multilateralism is of fundamental importance, and must be preserved. We are concerned about the anti-multilateral tendency in the area of disarmament and arms control that has been demonstrated by the new Administration of the major military Power, as evidenced by the positions it has taken on the negotiations on the protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention, on the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and on negotiations on the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, among others.

Apart from constituting a flagrant violation of the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, the establishment of a national missile defence system would restart the arms race, including in outer space.

We must establish a universal and non-discriminatory multilateral regime in the area of missile proliferation. The solution cannot be found in control regimes that basically meet the interests of one group of countries. The work of the Group of Experts on the issue of missiles is an important starting point, and will make it possible for Member States to review these issues in depth and with the objectivity necessary, so that together we can take the required decisions.

As is well known, the work carried out for more than six years by the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts on the Biological Weapons Convention was interrupted when, during its twenty-fourth session, the delegation of the United States — one of the depositary States — announced that it did not want to continue negotiations on the text presented by the Chairman of the Group, or even on an amended text. While reaffirming the validity of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group, Cuba would like to stress that what we have achieved after many years of work cannot simply be cast aside, and that the only way to strengthen the Convention is through multilateral, non-discriminatory negotiations.

Cuba welcomes the recent adoption of the Agreement concerning relations between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and we hope that this will contribute positively to the full implementation of that Convention.

Since we consider it more relevant than ever, we hope that after many years of waiting we will be able to take a final decision during the current session on the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in which we could evaluate the implementation of the agreements adopted by the Assembly in 1978.

For some time this year our country chaired the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The intensive and extensive consultations with members of this body during our mandate allowed us to see firsthand the broad interests of States in maintaining it as the only multilateral negotiation forum in the area of disarmament, despite the difficulties that it has been experiencing. It is therefore disturbing that the Conference on Disarmament cannot make progress on priority issues such as nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the arms race in outer space, due to the intransigent positions of some countries.

If we continue to extend these sessions without substantive progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the credibility of this body could be seriously affected. It would only serve the interests of those who prefer to act outside the Conference, avoiding the rest of the international community.

We welcome the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, which we consider an important achievement. At the same time, we cannot overlook the fact that the Programme has major limitations. It is unfortunate that, due to the inflexible position adopted by one delegation, responding to its own narrow national interests, the Programme could not make even a minimal reference to questions of key importance, such as those related to the unrestricted trade in and possession of small arms and light weapons and the need for these arms to be provided only to Governments or entities authorized by them.

Our country will comply strictly with the commitments assumed in the Programme of Action, and we hope that the First Committee can adopt a consensus resolution on this very important topic. We take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassadors Carlos dos Santos of Mozambique and Camillo Reyes of Colombia on their work in the Preparatory Conference and in the Conference itself respectively.

I would like to conclude, Mr. Chairman, by repeating that you can always count on the support of the Cuban delegation, and we wish you every success in your work.

Mr. Nene (South Africa): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee during the General Assembly's fifty-sixth session. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you and your Bureau lead the work of this Committee to a successful conclusion.

South Africa has unreservedly denounced the senseless and horrific terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September and shares in the pain and grief of the loved ones of those who lost their lives in the attacks. South Africa is confident that the perpetrators of these dastardly attacks will be brought to justice.

In our statement to this Committee last year we commented on the deepening crisis in international relations, non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, and on the inability of some multilateral forums to substantively address some of the most central issues of our day. Much of that has remained unchanged. In this context, we reiterate our firm belief that international peace and security require the participation of the entire international community. Multilateral engagement and partnership are essential. While some opportunities to advance and finalize some of our efforts during 2001 have again been lost, some valuable progress has been made, notably concerning conventional weapons.

The consensual outcome of the 2000 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference had given us some hope that the Conference on Disarmament could this year eventually untangle its deadlock and permit substantive work on a fissile materials treaty and on nuclear disarmament. This has not been the case. Moreover, it is difficult at this stage to discern advances in the "13 Steps" on nuclear disarmament that NPT States parties agreed to, and there are worrying signs of rollback on certain issues by nuclear-weapon States. South Africa is firm in its view that the undertakings that were given at the NPT Review Conference and the obligations that flow from them must be respected and fulfilled.

The indication of willingness on the part of the United States and the Russian Federation to reduce their nuclear arsenals to lower limits is welcomed, but concern exists regarding the linkage that has been established with the abrogation of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty). The ABM Treaty remains important in the maintenance and promotion of strategic stability and as a basis for further reduction of strategic offensive weapons. Grave consequences for the future of global security may result from abrogation of the Treaty. States must refrain from any steps that could lead to a nuclear arms race or undermine the international community's determination to prevent nuclear weapons proliferation.

The consensus outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects cannot be underestimated. South Africa is pleased that Africa's leadership role ensured that the Conference successfully adopted a realistic and implementable Programme of Action. While we recognize that the Programme of Action is a delicate balance of differing views, it does for the first time provide an internationally agreed comprehensive and achievable framework to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, based on the approach adopted by affected States. South Africa is satisfied that the Conference achieved its goals, and looks forward to intensified international cooperation in realizing the stated objectives and measures in the Programme of Action.

The Conference could not, however, agree on the need to establish and maintain controls over private ownership of small arms and the need to prevent sales of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. These issues remain of great concern to South Africa, and we continue to believe that they should be addressed — nationally, regionally and on a global level. We therefore call on all States to implement measures to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited only to Governments or to entities duly authorized by Governments and to implement legal restrictions on the unrestricted trade in and ownership of small arms and light weapons.

South Africa will jointly, with Colombia and Japan, submit a draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects that captures the achievements of the Conference, in particular the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action. The draft resolution also consolidates and replaces the previous South African and Japanese resolutions related to the issue of small arms.

Another success was the recent Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Nicaragua. The Anti-personnel Mine-Ban Convention continues to set new standards in disarmament; 120 States have ratified or acceded to the Convention in less than four years, and this is a record-breaking achievement. Stockpiles of anti-personnel mines are swiftly being eradicated; mine-victim casualties are decreasing, while funding for mine-action programmes is being sustained. Moreover, the international norm established by the Convention is having a global impact, as trade has almost disappeared and production declined dramatically.

The inclusive nature of the partnership between Governments and civil society in the creation of the Convention has been maintained and reinforced through the inter-sessional programme of work and its mechanisms. This work will now be assisted by the decision to establish an implementation support unit that will be of tremendous benefit to mine-affected developing countries, as well as other countries with small or inexperienced staff. Moreover, the unit will provide a central documentation and reference home for all activities related to the Convention, thereby preserving institutional knowledge and providing a sustainable backbone to the implementation process.

Recent events underline the threat that both biological and chemical weapons pose to modern society. It would, however, be an understatement to say that South Africa was disappointed by the outcome of the Biological Weapons Convention Ad Hoc Group negotiations for a protocol to strengthen the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The threat of disease being used as weapons of war and terror remains an issue of concern for South Africa, as does the need to combat disease and its debilitating impact on the socio-economic development of countries around the world, and especially in Africa. Our commitment during the negotiations was therefore to ensure that the implementation of the BWC and our common goal of preventing the threat posed by biological weapons are strengthened.

It is necessary that the international community as a whole take action to commit itself to strengthening the norm against the development, production, stockpiling and use of these reprehensible weapons. South Africa continues to see this as a core element of the international security architecture, and we remain convinced that this objective would be possible. The concerns that were expressed at the July-August meeting of the BWC Ad Hoc Group can still be addressed in a satisfactory manner.

The progress being made in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), including its universalization, is welcomed. We also note the progress made by all of the possessor States with regard to the destruction of chemical weapons, in particular those that have achieved or have exceeded the levels of destruction laid down by the Convention. We are also encouraged by the renewed vigour of the destruction programme of the Russian Federation. We are hopeful that with the assistance of States parties in a position to do so, the Russian Federation will achieve all its future destruction deadlines as set forth in the Convention.

My Government's concerns regarding weapons of mass destruction also relate to systems and technology that could be used to deliver these weapons. It is for this reason that South Africa supported the resolution on missiles, adopted at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, that led to the establishment of a panel of governmental experts to consider the issue of missiles in all its aspects. South Africa remains convinced that the proliferation of capabilities to develop missiles able to deliver weapons of mass destruction can only be effectively addressed through a multilateral process that would allow for active and substantive participation by all States.

South Africa attaches importance to the role of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) as an instrument of international humanitarian law. South Africa believes that a renewed focus should be placed on the CCW Convention as a viable instrument which could proactively address various conventional weapons deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects. South Africa views it as important that the Convention's Review Conference address issues that would improve the effective implementation of the Convention rather than reopening the existing Protocols.

South Africa would like to see an extension of the scope of application of the Convention to be in conformity with Amended Protocol II. Furthermore, the Amended Protocol's compliance mechanism, based on the principle of consultation, clarification and cooperation, should be made applicable to the Convention and its annexed Protocols. South Africa acknowledges the humanitarian concerns related to the use of mines other than anti-personnel mines and would like to see a process being launched by the Review Conference to consider a comprehensive instrument on such mines that would include issues related to detectability, self-destruction and sensitive fusing mechanisms. In addition, we support a process to urgently consider and develop an additional Protocol to deal with the explosive remnants of war.

The inability of the Conference on Disarmament over the past years to undertake substantive work, the fact that the majority of First Committee resolutions do not enjoy the support of all Member States and that the work of the Disarmament Commission is often ignored are reasons for concern. Part of the problem is that these disarmament mechanisms were created 23 years ago and they do not reflect today's realities. Our institutions and mechanisms, their membership, financial implications and methods of work are in need of serious re-evaluation and overhaul.

Lack of progress regarding the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is yet another cause of concern for my delegation. In this regard, my delegation would reiterate the emphasis that was placed by the 2000 NPT Review Conference on

> "The importance and urgency of signatures and ratifications, without delay and without conditions and in accordance with constitutional processes, to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty". (*NPT/CONF.2000/28* (*Parts I and II*), *p. 14*)

We appeal to Member States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty, as soon as possible, particularly those States identified in the Treaty's Annex II. The cessation of all nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosion will contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, to the process of nuclear disarmament leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and, therefore, to the enhancement of international peace and security. We will be participating in the article XIV Conference of the CTBT that is to be held later this year and will work to ensure that the Conference achieves its objective of promoting the early entry into force of the Treaty.

South Africa remains committed to working in this Committee and in all other disarmament and non-proliferation forums so as to achieve the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to limit the numbers of conventional weapons to the minimum required for self-defence.

Mr. Bakhit (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to join those who have preceded me in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee this year. We would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. We are confident that your rich experience in the field of disarmament will lead this Committee to the desired results. We would also like to take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Mya Than, for his successful chairmanship of the Committee last year. I would also like to commend the introductory statement made by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and his efforts to achieve disarmament and to promote the role of the Department in this respect.

The First Committee meets this year amidst serious developments and challenges in the field of international security, disarmament and arms control. The criminal terrorist act on 11 September, which took the lives of thousands of innocent people, makes it incumbent upon us, as an international community, to promote collective diplomatic work to combat international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It also requires that we make more international efforts to achieve disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. This is especially so given that such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists would have disastrous consequences for international peace and security. Once again, our delegation reiterates its full condemnation of this heinous act and offers its condolences to the American Government and people and to the bereaved families.

We believe that the international community should make efforts to root out the threats to international peace and security, and it should focus on the priorities concerning nuclear disarmament, weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. These are the priorities set out in the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978. It reaffirmed that the highest priority should be given to nuclear disarmament, weapons of mass destruction and then to conventional weapons. The Millennium Declaration also emphasized the endeavours to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, thus strengthening this approach.

Sudan deems it important to promptly hold an international conference to eliminate nuclear weapons. We also support the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Here, we express once again our concern over the failure to reach consensus in the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission on the agenda and objectives of this session.

We are keenly interested in what was mentioned by the Under-Secretary-General in his introductory statement before this Committee. He alerted us to the serious fact that global military spending is steadily growing, reaching $800 billion last year. This was also reflected in the reports of the United Nations and of international financial institutions. This comes, of course, at the expense of economic and social development in many developing countries, especially the least developed countries, which look to international assistance to eradicate poverty and backwardness and to achieve sustainable development and contribute to bridging the gap between developed and developing countries.

The Sudan welcomes the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons held last July. The draft Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons — through various measures on the national, regional and international levels, and the follow-up mechanisms — has established a solid basis for the international community and is a first step towards fighting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The implementation of the Programme requires intensive efforts on the part of Member States of the United Nations and other interested regional and international organizations by taking constructive steps to achieve the results and objectives provided for in that Programme.

Our delegation, in this respect, would like to reiterate anew its regret, because the Programme of Action does not contain any clear commitment by Member States to export weapons to Governments only — something that was advocated by my country at the July Conference, as well as by all African countries, because they are among those most affected by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the hands of terrorist groups that threaten peace and security on the continent. Sudan believes that the failure to include this in the document is a clear gap that might open the way towards illicit proliferation of these weapons in Africa, which suffers from conflicts and in which terrorist rebel movements play a destabilizing role.

As one of the African countries affected by landmines, Sudan supports all international efforts to eliminate them because of the threat to civilians. Sudan was one of the first countries to sign the Ottawa Convention and has participated in the review conferences, especially the one in Managua last year. Sudan reiterates its commitment to the letter and spirit of the Convention, and in this respect, we hope that all countries that are signatories of the Convention will be treated equally when it comes to assistance to clear mines and rehabilitate victims, and that certain geographical areas are not concentrated on to the exclusion of others.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world promotes international peace and security. In this respect, Sudan joined in African efforts that led to the conclusion of the Treaty of Pelindaba. Sudan supports efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The international community is also called upon to bring pressure to bear on Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially given that this was expressed by States parties to the NPT during the sixth review conference, in 2000. The Final Document of that conference emphasized the need for Israel to accede to NPT under the comprehensive safeguards system.

We share the keen interest of the international community on transparency in the field of armament as one of the means to promote international peace and security. But we emphasize at the same time that United Nations Register of Conventional Arms still lacks the necessary transparency. It should be expanded to include weapons of mass destruction. The Register also does not take into account the serious situation in the Middle East, where Israel is continuing to expand its arsenal of modern weapons, which are used in front of the whole world against innocent, unarmed civilians in Palestine, including women and children.

We are not members of the Conference on Disarmament. However, we follow with keen interest what is happening in this unique, deliberative forum for disarmament. We regret the continued failure of the Conference to agree on its agenda. We emphasize anew the importance of the commitment of Member States, especially the five nuclear-weapon States, to enter into serious negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, we reiterate the willingness of Sudan to cooperate with you in order to attain consensus on the agenda before you in a way that will serve the interests and purposes of disarmament.

Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, Sir, once again to reiterate the most enthusiastic congratulations of my delegation on seeing you preside over the work of this Committee, as we said when you were elected. As Vice-Chairman, I would also like to reiterate my fullest willingness to contribute to the success of our work under your leadership, especially in this time when historic circumstances, which cloud the prospects for international peace and security, make this Committee an extremely important and relevant forum for continuing of our actions.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the delegation of Chile, which, speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, set out the position of our region. Nevertheless, I would like to take this opportunity to present the position of the Government of Venezuela and to underscore basic aspects of the work that we shall do during the deliberations of the First Committee.

I would like to begin by saying that the events of 11 September have moved the international community. As other countries have done, my country has categorically condemned the terrorist acts against New York, Washington and Pennsylvania — acts that have shaken global foundations. In that regard, we have expressed our condolences to, and solidarity with, the Government of the United States of America and the families of the victims. We condemn acts such as the ones that took place on that tragic day, which we consider to be attacks against all the peoples of the world. Venezuela itself was also affected, as several of our citizens were victims of the attack on the Twin Towers.

Just as the eyes of the world have been fixed on those deplorable events, so too will the attention of the international community be fixed on the results of the work to be achieved by the First Committee. The Committee of which we are a part will have the task of bringing about and supporting peace, disarmament and international security in these turbulent times. Today more than ever, we must act firmly and join all of our efforts to find peaceful ways and means to end international conflicts, to deal with the threat posed by the use of weapons of mass destruction and to enforce international law and to prevent the violation of its most basic norms. Our objective in this area should be to succeed in steering the United Nations towards the promotion of an approach based on international cooperation that leads to the prevention of conflicts and to an improved ability to respond to the humanitarian emergencies that stem from them.

My delegation believes that security is a subject that is not linked to international peace and security alone, but encompasses a series of elements within a multisectoral framework that, in addition to security, includes the commitment to promote democracy and full respect for human rights, to battle crime and illicit drugs, and to foster overall social and economic development in a harmonious way. With respect to the Committee's agenda, we note with concern that, on the issue of disarmament and arms control, there is not always the political will — or the ability — to comply with the obligations we have assumed in international treaties and agreements. This is one of our most significant challenges: meeting the commitments made by States in the resolutions we adopt.

Venezuela enshrined disarmament in the preamble to its 1999 Constitution as one of the basic principles of its foreign policy. The President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Hugo Chávez Frías, attaches particular importance to this issue in various international forums. Just yesterday, in a statement to the United Nations at the Palace of Nations in Geneva, he reiterated his proposal, made in other United Nations forums, that defence spending be reduced by 50 per cent so that the resources freed up as a result may be used to promote social development.

Transparency in military spending is also a goal of my country, and we are gradually achieving it in order to comply with resolution 54/43, which calls for the gathering of objective information on military issues, including transparency in spending and in the Register of Conventional Arms.

My country favours the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the various regions of the world, on the basis of agreements freely entered into among the members of a region and of the commitments made in each region. Venezuela supports the convening of an international conference on reducing the nuclear danger, an initiative aimed at identifying ways and means of achieving the elimination of nuclear weapons in the near future, as agreed in the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This would be a contribution to the establishment of confidence-building weapons.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), I wish to state that my Government is taking the necessary steps to ratify that instrument. The delay in doing so is due primarily to the process of reform and structural change going on in our country. This is nevertheless one of the foreign policy priorities of my country and of our legislative assembly.

We also support the elaboration of a binding legal instrument through which military Powers would commit themselves unequivocally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. As a full party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and its protocols, my country supports guarantees on the non-use of nuclear weapons against the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

We also have on the agenda of the First Committee the extremely important topic of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which intensifies conflicts between States and threatens collective and individual security within our countries. We must address this issue as a shared responsibility, on the basis of international cooperation in order to adopt measures to eradicate this illicit activity. In this connection, we support the agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place last July.

With regard to anti-personnel landmines, Venezuela is very pleased to see the progress that has been made on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. My country has shown its commitment to the objectives of the Convention by taking part in the demining process being carried out in Central American countries, which has yielded major benefits for the inhabitants of formerly mined areas. Venezuela is participating with military experts in these types of activities, as well as in the training programmes being carried out in various countries, including the seminar on mine destruction that took place in Argentina in November 2000.

We wish to point out that mines that have not been removed continue to be a daily menace in countries that have experienced periods of conflict, and to reiterate our concern about zones where mines are still used as combat weapons, in the hope that we will be able to ban them completely. My country believes that financial contributions are key to carrying out demining programmes in various parts of the world, especially in our region, where we think it is important to highlight the financing activities being carried out by countries parties to the Convention, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. These activities require ever-greater technical, financial and human resources, which the international community should support generously.

My country believes that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction should be strengthened by appropriate measures to establish a multilateral verification system, something that has been delayed for many years. It is more important today than ever before to try to completely eradicate the threat to all mankind presented by these terrible weapons.

My country reiterates its unambiguous position on this matter and once again calls on world leaders to implement the principles set out in the Millennium Declaration. As I said earlier, my Government believes that defence spending should be reduced and the proceeds invested in human capital — education, housing, health, employment, the environment and justice — especially in the world's poorest countries. If these problems are not resolved through the commitments adopted by the world's heads of State or Government, they could give rise to conflicts and inequities that could have international ramifications. To resolve them, our only path is through respect for commitments. Otherwise, violence and other evils could cause grave situations throughout the world. For that reason, the Committee also has the responsibility to adopt measures against such threats to security, with a view to contributing to peace and harmony among nations.

Our goal should be to lay the foundations of a safer, more peaceful and more prosperous world for all mankind, and for future generations. My delegation reaffirms that it will fully cooperate in attaining the Committee's objectives for the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We reiterate our hope that, in this new millennium, we will be able to build a world of peace and solidarity.

Mr. Faessler (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to wish you every success in your endeavours. I assure you of the full support of my delegation so that the Committee's work will be crowned with success, especially in these difficult times. I would like also to congratulate your country on its major commitment to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau. I cannot fail to thank the previous Chairman for his commitment, and Mr. Dhanapala and his Secretariat team for their support for the work of the Committee.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September, which struck at the heart of the United States but which were in fact directed against the universal values of justice, freedom and democracy, showed the fragility of international peace and security. My Government condemned those acts of violence, and my entire country joined in demonstrations of sadness and sympathy with the victims. Today, I reiterate those feelings to the Government and the people of the United States. International solidarity, dialogue and determination must guide our efforts to restore justice and eradicate the scourge of international terrorism. My country is ready fully to support those efforts.

Last month's terrorist attacks showed that the environment of international peace and security has changed in recent years. Traditional international conflicts have been supplemented, if not replaced, by internal conflicts in which non-State actors play an increasing role. In addition to terrorism, other significant developments include the proliferation of organized crime, computer crime, et cetera. In this new environment, it is urgent to revisit the international order and to find new and credible solutions in order to ensure world peace and security, while remaining aware that the task ahead will be long and arduous.

This applies also to the more traditional but nevertheless relevant tasks of the First Committee: non-proliferation efforts, arms control and disarmament, relating both to weapons of mass destruction and to conventional weapons. In recent times, there has been little progress in those areas. The central question is: what are the possible contributions that non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament can make to the fight against new threats such as international terrorism? In the view of my Government, it is especially necessary to undertake effective and substantial multilateral efforts, to consolidate existing instruments against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to set up universally verifiable and transparent arms control and disarmament regimes. Such regimes, inter alia, prevent weapons of mass destruction and technological knowledge relating to them from falling into the wrong hands. We must also counter efforts to vitiate arms control and disarmament agreements and be more forceful in reminding recalcitrant States of their obligations.

More concretely, and more specifically related to the Committee's work, we call on all States which have not yet done so to ratify, as soon as possible and unconditionally, all arms control and disarmament agreements open to them. I particularly call on those countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

For the third consecutive year, the Conference on Disarmament ended its annual session without having been able to conduct substantive negotiations. Despite the extremely commendable efforts of several Presidents of the Conference, it has not been possible to agree on a programme of work, even though the laudable efforts of the three Special Coordinators on procedural issues leave room for some hope that substantive work can be resumed. The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral forum for arms control and disarmament negotiations. It must play a role in the context of the new challenges to international peace and security. A significant step in that direction was the resumption of negotiations on a ban on the production of fissile materials for military purposes and on international inspection of fissile material production facilities and stocks; these would prevent such materials from being used for improper purposes.

With regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), Switzerland is delighted with the progress made since the Convention's entry into force and is confident that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, located at The Hague, will be able to continue its work without fetters. My country has engaged in more effective implementation of the Convention. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain. First of all, the elimination of chemical weapons cannot be achieved until all States of the international community have ratified the Convention; I thus call on all States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so as soon as possible. Moreover, existing stocks of chemical weapons constitute not only a continued danger to the environment and to populations, but also a possible source of supply for, inter alia, terrorist groups. For those reasons among others, my Government is planning to enhance significantly its contribution to the destruction of stockpiled chemical weapons in Russia. Moreover, in the framework of the CWC, Switzerland has placed at the disposal of threatened populations protective equipment and mobile analytical laboratories in the event of chemical incidents.

After six years of diplomatic and scientific efforts under the able guidance of Ambassador Toth of Hungary, negotiations at Geneva, in the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, aiming to conclude a protocol on strengthening the Convention, reached a deadlock last summer. The threat of biological weapons, including that of bioterrorism, is today more than ever a key problem for international security.

We must use all means, including multilateral instruments such as the verification protocol, to reduce and eliminate this threat, whatever its origin and at every level. This must be a joint effort made by all key players. The goal of these efforts would not only be to reinforce the prohibition and total elimination of biological weapons, but also to prevent such weapons from falling, as in the case of chemical and nuclear weapons, into the hands of terrorist groups. The Fifth Review Conference of the States parties to the Convention, which is to be held at the end of the year in Geneva, will be forward-looking and should provide an opportunity to strengthen these efforts, in particular by confirming the current mandate of the negotiations.

In July of this year the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects took place in New York. We welcome the Programme of Action adopted by that Conference, which, we believe, has to be regarded as the beginning of a process. My country endeavoured to make a substantive contribution to that Conference; together with France, we launched an initiative on the tracing, marking and record-keeping of small arms and light weapons.

The Programme of Action recognized the importance of this question and recommended that a study be undertaken in order to evaluate the possibility of elaborating an international instrument on the matter. This important step encourages us to continue our initiative. We are also delighted at the interest shown in the first edition of the *Small Arms Survey*. The second edition of this yearbook is currently in the preparatory stage. Its purpose is to provide reliable information and analysis on all aspects of the problem of small arms and light weapons, whose deadly effects on a daily basis are well known.

The Third Meeting of States Parties to the anti-personnel mine ban Convention was held in Managua from 18 to 21 September. This Conference contributed to further progress being made with respect to the universality and the implementation of the Convention. My country is grateful to the Government for Nicaragua for the excellent way in which the Conference was organized, which helped us to better understand the problems relating to the elimination of these weapons in Latin America.

The flexible and innovative institutional mechanism set up under this Convention ensures effective international cooperation in the field of mine action. In this context, my country welcomes the decision taken at Managua to create an implementation support unit within the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Its purpose is to support, on the substantive as well as the logistical level, the inter-sessional process.

There are two other areas to which we attach considerable importance in the field of anti-personnel landmines. The first is assistance to victims. In this area, my country, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Health

Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund in particular, has been developing a strategic concept. The second is the destruction of stocks of anti-personnel mines. Switzerland is honoured to have been elected as co-Rapporteur for the Standing Committee dealing with this matter.

The Review Conference of the 1981 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will take place at the end of the year in Geneva. It will provide an opportunity to evaluate the implementation of the Convention and of its Protocols as well as to consider and evaluate means to still further reduce excessive injury or indiscriminate effects relating to the use of certain conventional weapons. Switzerland is pleased with the progress accomplished in recent months under the able guidance of the President-designate, Ambassador Luck of Australia, and the friends of the President. This progress provides us with the prospect of a more sustained process in the future. I will come back to this item during the thematic debate.

In conclusion, let me say that I venture to hope that the events of 11 September, far from marking a retreat, will indeed breathe new life into our work, thus helping to promote and to ensure international peace and security, within the framework of a multilateral process that, while undoubtedly imperfect, has proved reliable.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Sir, I should like to express our pleasure at your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. I should like also to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. We are convinced that thanks to your vast experience and skill, the work of this Committee will be successful and constructive.

I should like also to express my thanks to Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General in charge of disarmament, for the efforts he has been making to carry out the tasks entrusted to him by this Committee.

Last year's Millennium Declaration stressed the fact that we cannot accept the manufacture or stockpiling of nuclear weapons and of other weapons of mass destruction or the threat of use, for any reason, of these weapons. As a result, we must work tirelessly to eliminate them through a commitment by all States Members of the United Nations to respect that Declaration.

This Committee should make diligent efforts not to accept double standards or to allow the fate of peoples to be manipulated through the use of a certain kind of terminology.

At a time when some are denying peoples the right to defend their dignity, their land and their right to self-determination, others are allowed to acquire all types of weapons and to use small and light weapons. In addition, all kinds of weapons are provided to the aggressor, and the doors of nuclear facilities are open to them so that they can profit from others' expertise in the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

The Syrian Arab Republic has always stressed that it attaches great importance to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and it would like to express its grave concern over Israel's insurmountable obstruction of that process. Israel refuses to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), despite the fact that the international community knows full well that by doing so it is greatly undermining the Treaty's credibility and universality. Israel's refusal obstructs the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, despite the good intentions of the other parties concerned and despite the other proposals that have been put forward to this effect.

The Syrian Arab Republic believes that a nuclear-weapon-free zone should be created in the Middle East.

This requires, first, the support of Israel, the only State of the region that possesses a nuclear arsenal and nuclear facilities. It must accede to the NPT, subject its nuclear installations to the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and eliminate its entire nuclear arsenal. All these measures are prerequisites to the establishment of such a zone.

Secondly, the United Nations is the appropriate forum for carrying out serious negotiations to enable all States of the Middle East to work jointly for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Furthermore, the Syrian Arab Republic supports the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to review and assess progress in the implementation of the outcome of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. This would offer the opportunity to review the major aspects of disarmament in order to adapt it to the new world situation. To that end, the international community and international opinion must be mobilized in favour of eliminating nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and of reducing conventional weapons.

As I said, the Syrian Arab Republic supports the idea of convening the fourth special session and stresses the need for the true political will of the international community to implement the outcome and decisions of the first special session. It would be an opportunity to pave the way for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and to carry out full and complete disarmament under effective international control. In the course of the second and third special sessions, we were unable to obtain a consensus. As a result, the Syrian Arab Republic feels that the General Assembly should adopt a resolution unanimously to reflect the international community's genuine readiness to convene a fourth session as soon as possible. The results achieved by the 2000 NPT Review Conference confirmed the need for the fourth special session to focus on the international community's priority of fully eliminating nuclear weapons and to set a timetable for it.

In July 1996, the International Court of Justice issued an Advisory Opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. In that Opinion, the Court stated that, given the unique characteristics of those weapons, in particular their destructive capacity, their capacity to cause untold human suffering, and their ability to cause damage to generations to come, the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be a potential catastrophe. The destructive capacity of nuclear weapons cannot be limited in time or space. They can destroy all human civilization and the global ecology.

The Syrian Arab Republic, on the basis of its principled policy of promoting international peace and security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and within the general framework of complete and total disarmament, has done its utmost to support the United Nations resolutions on disarmament. In 1986, the Syrian Arab Republic acceded to the NPT and joined its safeguards system. The Syrian Arab Republic supports General Assembly resolution 55/33 X on the follow-up to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. The Syrian Arab Republic invites Members to take practical measures to establish a timetable for the elimination of nuclear weapons under effective international control.

The Syrian Arab Republic is closely following the issue of transparency in armaments in all its aspects and endorses the statement of the Arab Group. The Syrian Arab Republic feels that States Members of the United Nations must take the concerns of the Arab States into consideration in reviewing this important aspect of the Organization's work. In considering issues related to weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons in particular, the Organization must also take into consideration the prevailing situation in the Middle East, including Israel's occupation of Arab territories, its possession of nuclear weapons — which Arab States do not possess — and its refusal to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic participated in the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9-20 July 2001. In this connection, we welcome in particular the paragraphs of the report addressing the rights of peoples to self-defence, resistance of foreign occupation and self-determination. My delegation believes that the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference is a good step forward, although it did not live up to all the aspirations and expectations of every delegation.

In conclusion, my delegation assures you, Sir, of its full support towards the achievement of constructive results in the course of the Committee's efforts to reach our ultimate objective: nuclear disarmament and the destruction of weapons of mass destruction. In that way can we spare our peoples the pain of a destructive war.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): The Vietnamese delegation wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are fully confident that, under your stewardship, the Committee will arrive at a very fruitful outcome. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau. We wish also to thank Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar for his contributions to the work of the Committee as its Chairman at the last session. We highly appreciate the concerted efforts and dedication of Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala to the work of the Committee and to the cause of disarmament and security as a whole.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself fully with the statement made by the Permanent

Representative of Myanmar on Tuesday in his capacity as coordinator for the Association of South-East Asian Nations. My delegation would like to comment on a couple of other points.

First and foremost, my delegation would like to join previous speakers in this debate in voicing our strongest condemnation of the heinous terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. We wish to extend our deepest condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of the attacks and to the people and the Government of the United States.

In the wake of the events of 11 September, the horrible risk of the use of devices of mass destruction must be lurking in the backs of many minds. The scale of destruction would have been beyond our wildest imagination, as was pointed out in various newspapers in this country, if the terrorists had brought with them on board one of the Boeing 767s that crashed into the Twin Towers just one pound of uranium.

Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, is one of those who were very concerned about this. Addressing the General Assembly on 1 October the Secretary-General said it was hard to imagine how the tragedy could have been worse. He went further to stress that there is much we could do to help prevent future terrorist acts from being carried out with weapons of mass destruction. My delegation fully supports this view and strongly believes that our debate should focus on the efforts to promote the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear and biological weapons in particular.

As regards disarmament in general, Viet Nam has, over the years, consistently supported regional and international initiatives to achieve the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and we will continue to do so. In the realities of our world today, policies which rely on nuclear deterrence and the retention of huge arsenals of nuclear warheads are simply wrong and unjustifiable on any count. My delegation would like to underline that it is now a matter of urgency and, in many ways, of survival for humankind that the United Nations should redouble its efforts to galvanize the world community to work hard together for a world free from nuclear and biological weapons.

One way to do this has been pointed out in the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations, which has been endorsed by all the heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Organization: to convene an international conference to identify ways and means to eliminate the danger of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. It is high time that preparation for such a conference went ahead to ensure its successful outcome.

In this connection, Viet Nam wishes to emphasize that the surest guarantee against the use of weapons of mass destruction is the total prohibition of such weapons. We hold that the conclusion by the United Nations of a convention banning nuclear weapons is overdue. One of the objectives of the international conference, in our view, is to reach some agreement on this imperative.

We are going to hold the first preparatory meeting for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons next summer. This will be an opportunity to assess progress in the implementation of the provisions of this important regime. It is unfortunate to note that the nuclear States are yet to be forthcoming in realizing the commitments they made under article VI of the Treaty and, more recently, at the 2000 Review Conference. Viet Nam wishes to join other delegations in calling on nuclear States to carry out without any further delay the practical steps agreed upon in the Final Document of the Review Conference as initial building blocks leading towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is encouraging, however, to recognize that the two principal nuclear States have repeatedly pledged to work harder together to accelerate the START process with a view to reducing more drastically their stockpiles of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems.

Nevertheless, my country continues to note with great concern the negative implications of the ongoing efforts to develop and deploy anti-ballistic missile systems, as well as the determined pursuit of advanced military technologies for deployment in outer space. This tendency is very worrisome to many countries, including my own, for it may trigger another costly and wasteful arms race, which mankind as a whole cannot afford. Once again, we wish to underline that the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty is a cornerstone of international strategic stability, and its abrogation holds grave consequences for world peace and security. We therefore call on the States parties to the Treaty to respect its integrity and comply fully with its provisions.

As the Assembly may know, Viet Nam, on behalf of the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, has introduced a paper on 10 measures leading to a world free of nuclear weapons at the recent session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Our contribution has been reflected in the Chairman's working paper, which will serve as a basis for the formulation of guidelines on ways and means to promote nuclear disarmament. My delegation sincerely hopes that at the coming session of the Disarmament Commission, those measures will be agreed upon and new momentum will be created in our common efforts to acquit ourselves of this urgent task. One of the immediate tasks described in our paper is to enable the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force as soon as possible. There are several obstacles to overcome, and even greater and more consistent efforts are called for. We look forward to the rescheduled conference to facilitate this objective.

Bioterrorism is a word often heard in this city these days after the tragic events which took place a few miles from this room. Even if what we hear is only rumours or hearsay, efforts to strengthen the compliance with the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention are needed as urgently as ever. In this context, my delegation regrets that the negotiations on a protocol setting up a verification and compliance regime for the Convention have not been successful. We earnestly hope that the differences will soon be resolved and fruitful negotiations on this regime will be resumed at the upcoming Review Conference.

At this session, in a very turbulent year, the disarmament and security agenda for the First Committee is fuller than ever before. We encourage you, Mr. Chairman, to engage all delegations in the more urgent tasks. On our part, we pledge that we will cooperate fully with all other delegations and with your Bureau to make our meetings and discussions as rewarding and fruitful as we all expect.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the very honourable post of Chairman of the First Committee. We know you as an experienced diplomat who enjoys a great deal of authority in the United Nations. We would like to express the hope that under your enlightened chairmanship the Committee will be able to deal successfully with the problems on its agenda. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

The current session of the General Assembly is taking place at a tragic moment when one of the United Nations Member States, the United States, has suffered an unprecedented and truly barbaric act of aggression committed by international terrorism. We would like to express our sincere and profound condolences to the victims and families of those who died. Russia has first-hand experience of terrorism. That is why we clearly understand what the American people are feeling. The President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, stressed that the Russian people fully shared the pain of the American people and offered their support.

The large-scale terrorist attack perpetrated against the United States on 11 September shows where the true challenge to security comes from. All civilized States should fight against such challenges, especially given the threat posed by the potential use by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that joint efforts should be undertaken, in compliance with existing agreements, but building upon them, to ensure the global rule of law. The previous century was a period of wars and creative work, of the arms race and disarmament, of serious conflicts and success in the settlement of some of them. Much has been done, especially in recent years, to establish a world order based on equal security, common responsibility and the cooperation of all States. But much more has yet to be done if the decades of nuclear confrontation and global tension are to be succeeded by an era of real disarmament, strategic stability and constructive partnership.

Russia's foreign policy priorities undoubtedly lie in the field of disarmament ideology. Having ratified a number of key disarmament instruments — the START II Treaty and the package of START II agreements signed in New York in 1997, including those relating to the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty — Russia has confirmed in deed, and not just in word, its commitment to honour its nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation obligations. We urge other countries to follow our example. Russia supports the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We would like to underline the fact that that Conference graphically illustrated that the NPT remains one of the most significant mechanisms in the field of arms control and disarmament — a model of interaction for the members of the international community and an example of effective multilateral diplomacy.

The Committee is well aware of the initiatives put forward by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Putin, in the field of nuclear disarmament. What we are proposing is a radical reduction in the strategic nuclear weapons of Russia and the United States — to 1,500 nuclear warheads for each of the parties by 2008, and perhaps to even lower levels thereafter. By way of comparison, I remind the Committee that, according to the terms of the START I Treaty, by 2001 the parties were supposed to have reduced their strategic nuclear arsenals to 6,000 nuclear warheads. We look forward to a concrete response from the American side in the framework of the intensive dialogue we have started with the United States on the interrelated issues of strategic defensive and offensive armaments.

Our positive agenda in the field of international security is straightforward and comprehensible. It is to seek lasting peace and true disarmament, which can be achieved only through common efforts and a real contribution by each State to the common system of strategic stability, while preserving and strengthening existing instruments, treaties and agreements in this field. The Russian concept of a global control system in the area of the non-proliferation of missiles and missile technologies would make it possible to resolve concrete issues of international security through constructive interaction, while strengthening, rather than destroying, whatever positive achievements have been created in this area in recent years.

In our dialogue with other nations, we continue to pursue a policy aimed at the more active use of the potential of the United Nations, especially that offered by the relationship between the permanent members of the Security Council. In this connection, we recall the Russian proposal to begin a consultation process on strategic stability issues between the five nuclear States that are permanent members of the Security Council, with a view to unblocking the way to genuine nuclear disarmament. We also draw the attention of the Committee to the initiative put forward to the President of the Russian Federation at the Millennium Summit with regard to ensuring energy supplies for the sustainable development of humankind, a radical solution to the problems posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to the problem of global environmental improvement. Efforts to implement this initiative are already under way in the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and we welcome them.

In this context, I cannot fail to mention once again the role and significance of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which was, and continues to be, a system-creating backbone of strategic stability. The need to preserve and strengthen that Treaty was also clearly reaffirmed in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

At the current session of the General Assembly, the delegation of Russia, together with those of China and Belarus, will again introduce a draft resolution on the preservation and strengthening of the ABM Treaty. In so doing, we will posit the need for the further mobilization of the efforts of the international community to prevent the undermining of the existing system of arms control and disarmament treaties and agreements.

Of course, the international community must look to the future and move towards elaborating new frameworks for strategic relations. Speaking metaphorically, however, I would like to say that we should not destroy the house that we have been safely living in before a new one has been built. In his statement to the General Assembly on 24 September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Ivanov, dealt in detail with the important subject of preventing the arms race in outer space. He listed concrete elements that could form the basis of a comprehensive agreement against deploying, using or threatening to use weapons in outer space. The Minister also made a new proposal to declare a moratorium on the deployment of weapons in outer space, pending such an agreement. We are open to frank discussion about how to set in motion negotiations on these important issues.

Another priority issue for Russia at the current session is the security of international information. The Russian initiative in this area has been prompted by the need to identify and try to eliminate, at the international level, the true threats to international stability and security that have arisen in connection with the new information technology-related phase of the global scientific and technological revolution.

In this context, Russia will introduce at this session an updated version of the resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security". We hope that, as in previous years, it will be adopted by consensus.

Russia also favours the creation of an efficient verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention, in the form of a legally binding protocol. The negotiations on this subject should be continued on a multilateral basis.

As for the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, Russia withdrew in December 2000 the reservations previously made by the Soviet Union with regard to this document. We would encourage other nations to follow our example. We view the Chemical Weapons Convention as an effective instrument for strengthening international peace and security, and we advocate ensuring its universal character.

We commend the work in this area carried out by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and welcome the relationship agreement on cooperation between the OPCW and the United Nations. We are in favour of developing this cooperation. We think it useful to regularly discuss at General Assembly sessions issues relating to the implementation of the Convention banning chemical weapons.

We are convinced that if the problems of preventing and restricting the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the world are not resolved it will be impossible to settle conflicts, ensure the security of people or maintain stable economic growth. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July this year, identified major areas for action by the international community in this field. The most important thing now is to get down to active and concrete follow-up work and to implement the decisions made at the Conference.

We would like to note the significance of the 1980 "inhumane weapons" Convention (CCW) as an important international legal document regulating the use of concrete types of conventional arms. We are ready to support and facilitate in every way the implementation of all proposals put forward in the course of its review process, with a view to further strengthening and ensuring the universal character of the Convention and its protocols. The Second Review Conference to be held in December this year should be a milestone in this regard.

We would like to draw attention to the insufficiently effective use that has been made of the potential of the Conference on Disarmament. It is our firm intention to give, through collective efforts, an impetus to the work of this unique forum, which undoubtedly would help to serve our common interests. Russia has already presented its proposals on this issue.

The multifaceted nature and urgency of disarmament and non-proliferation issues imply that the time has now come to convene a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We actively support the idea of holding such a session.

In conclusion, I assure you, Sir, and all my colleagues of the readiness of the Russian delegation to continue to confirm its commitment to the goals and objectives in the area of international security by practical steps.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.7

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee
7th meeting
Thursday, 11 October 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös .... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): Allow me to add my congratulations to those already addressed to you, Sir, on your election to the post of Chairman of the First Committee, and to express my confidence that under your skilful leadership substantive progress will be made in dealing with the important issues on the agenda of the Committee. I would also like to extend my felicitations to other members of the Bureau.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and also to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his comprehensive and detailed statements on various disarmament and international security issues.

The current session of the First Committee is being held at a crucial time, when the dust from the completely destroyed World Trade Center towers in New York has still not settled and the pain of those who lost friends and relatives has not yet eased. During the plenary meetings of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly on the agenda item "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", I expressed my country's deep condolences to the President, the Government and the people of the United States of America, and I reiterate my profound sympathy to them. The unbelievable acts of violence committed in the United States on 11 September deeply shocked not only people in America but people all over the world. We intimately sensed the pain of Americans as being our grief, too, because a citizen of my country is among the missing victims of the terrible terrorist attack. She was only 32 years old, and was very happy to go to work as an accountant for a company located in one of the world's tallest buildings. As *The New York Times* of 30 October 2001 said,

> "On September 11 at 9 a.m., Zhanetta Tsoy's life was to begin anew. It was Day 1 of a new job in a new country, a place where she and her husband believed their futures were as big and bright as the New York skyline ... Her husband ...said she was 'very hurried' when she left for her first morning of work ... 'Zhanetta wanted very much to make a good start.' In the days since the tower collapsed, [her husband] has looked for the words to explain the disaster to their daughter".

I think that this terrible event will cast its shadow over our deliberations during the work of the First Committee, and I hope that united we will manage to resolve all the problems ahead.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, despite the successful conclusion of the May 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), progress in

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this area has been limited. We proved our adherence to the process of freeing the world from nuclear weapons by joining the NPT in 1993 as a non-nuclear State. After the withdrawal of the last nuclear warheads from our territory, in April 1995, and the elimination of the remaining nuclear device at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, on 31 May 1995, we became a State that voluntary refused to possess nuclear weapons. As a party to the NPT Treaty, Kazakhstan is firmly committed to the non-proliferation regime and calls on all States to adhere to this Treaty.

Proceeding from the necessity to fully strengthen the non-proliferation regime, we signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996, and continue to make practical contributions to efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the monitoring of compliance with the CTBT. It is the strong intention of my Government to ratify the Treaty before the forthcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, through a letter to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, expressed this desire of my Government.

We consider the International Conference entitled "The Twenty-first Century: Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World", which was held in Almaty on 29 to 30 August of this year, one of the practical contributions to the matter of nuclear disarmament. The Final Memorandum of that Conference, circulated as an official document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, stresses,

> "Despite differences in political views and the varying levels of economic development and technological possibilities in their countries, the participants in this conference are united in their eagerness to create a safer world and to make the process of non-proliferation irreversible. We call for humanity to use its scientific and technological capabilities not for mutual threats or one another's destruction, but instead to place them in the service of further peaceful development, progress, and human prosperity." (A/56/348, annex, sixth paragraph)

In this regard, I can not but mention the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in Ishikawa-Kanazawa, entitled "The Asian Pacific Region: Evolution of the scope of security and disarmament in the twenty-first century", which was held in Kanazawa, Japan, under the auspices of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, between 28 and 31 August, where I participated, and which is another practical step in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and public education.

Kazakhstan's ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems on 11 July of this year is one more step towards strengthening the country's status as a full member of this Treaty. My country will support all efforts aimed at the preservation of and compliance with this Treaty, which is a cornerstone for maintaining global peace, security, strategic stability and for promoting further strategic nuclear arms reduction.

Disarmament is facing difficult times now, and challenges existed well before the tragic events of 11 September. The symptoms of the crisis, clearly seen in the pattern of the Conference on Disarmament, are subjects of concern to my country. As a full member of the only multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament, Kazakhstan is in favour of the earliest possible start to negotiations, especially on fissile materials, which is very important for realization of the NPT provisions.

There are other types of weapons of mass destruction that, along with nuclear weapons, pose no lesser degree of danger, if not more, especially in the current situation. That is why it is vitally important not only to eliminate the old weapons of mass destruction but also to establish a control mechanism to prevent the development of new types of such weapons. In 1993 we signed, and in 1999 we ratified, the Chemical Weapons Convention with the purpose of strengthening the international regime of non-proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction. We will be strongly committed to its obligations.

Kazakhstan also fully supports the humanitarian orientation of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and strictly abides by a unilateral moratorium on the export, including re-export and transit, of anti-personnel landmines, as declared by the Government of Kazakhstan in 1994.

Transparency in the field of control and reduction of conventional arms provides a good basis for preventing a destabilizing build-up of weapons in any region or an excessive concentration of weapons in any State. Kazakhstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Our country has provided information on a regular basis since 1992 and considers the Register to be a most important component of such control. We also welcome the broadest participation of Member States of the United Nations in the functioning of this important international instrument. In this regard, while the Programme of Action adopted during the recently held United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects did not fully meet the expectations of all countries, we reiterate our readiness to undertake all bilateral, regional and international cooperation actions to ensure its implementation.

We attach great attention to the realization of the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, which will constitute an important step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and towards promoting general and complete disarmament. Kazakhstan will further continue to participate consistently and constructively in the work being carried out to establish this zone. In this regard, we highly appreciate the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which is an effective instrument in helping to create an atmosphere of cooperation and disarmament in the region.

In view of the unique situation, we also consider positive the contribution of Mongolia to the process of general and complete disarmament, and we fully support its tireless efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

My country continues to work on the implementation of the initiative put forward by the President of Kazakhstan at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in 1992 on the convening of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). This initiative is taking real shape and becoming a tangible factor in contemporary international life. On 16 November of this year, heads of State and Government are expected to sign the Almaty Act, the final document of this regional forum, which reflects major aspects of cooperation: joint activities to combat new threats, including terrorism, separatism, extremism, illegal drugs and weapon trafficking; a regional mechanism for the elaboration and application of confidence-building mechanisms in their broader meaning; the institutionalization of the CICA, its structure, Secretariat, regular and specialized meetings, and academic and professional inputs.

We are convinced that the CICA initiative has a rational kernel and corresponds with the ideas and tasks of the United Nations. It is obvious that the variety of declared targets will demand close cooperation and interaction in terms of solving the security problems in the vast region of Asia, especially in the current situation.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to support the hope expressed in your opening statement "that in the extraordinary circumstances prevailing at this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, all of us will make genuine efforts to come to grips with the many crucial security challenges of our time". (A/C.1/56/PV.3)

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, allow me to associate myself with the previous speakers in congratulating you most warmly on your election to preside over the First Committee. I wish you every success. I also wish to congratulate the Vice-Chairman and the other members of the Bureau, who, indeed, are also eminently qualified. We are sure that, thanks to your leadership and the cooperation of the other members of the Bureau, our work will be crowned with success.

My delegation will do its best to achieve the objectives we have set for ourselves here. I would also like to thank Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the commendable efforts that he has been making on this issue. We also wish to thank him for his comprehensive statement of last Monday, during which he raised various issues on the programme of work of the First Committee. We also wish him every success.

The tragic events of last 11 September in New York and Washington shocked the entire world. Those events will remain engraved in the collective memory of humankind for they incarnate a loss of humaneness. These are incredible acts that are inadmissible in our civilization. We had believed that the destruction caused by these terrorist acts was limited to the lethal effect of the weapons, but the reality is that such terrorist acts can destroy the safety and security of cities. We should like to extend our most sincere condolences to the American Government and people and to the bereaved families.

As we have done at previous sessions of the First Committee, we all aspire to an ideal world, free from armed conflict and nuclear waste, a world which would have total control over all types of weapons, a world in which nuclear tests do not occur and in which nuclear weapons would be neither produced nor stockpiled.

All of us here aspire to a transparent world in which efforts at disarmament and the creation of a nuclear-free world are successful. We also hope to see, each in their continent, an end to all weapons of mass destruction. We pay tribute to the African continent, which has become a model of a nuclear-weapon-free zone through its ban on the production and stockpiling of all nuclear weapons. We hope that the international community will make every effort to convince those States that still possess military arsenals to join other members of the international community in acceding to the relevant treaties, in particular those on weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

It is regrettable that to date, despite appeals from the international community to control these deadly weapons and prevent their spread, some developed States are continuing to build up their arsenals and to modernize them through modern technology, which is used to create weapons that are even more deadly. It is a matter for regret that this arms race, which could wipe out human civilization, is continuing. This is a particular concern given the difficulty of preventing such weapons from falling into the hands of dangerous gangs and terrorist groups and the fact that reports on the disappearance of such weapons come out occasionally.

My delegation believes that the best way to prevent the arms race is to resolve political problems throughout the world and convince the parties to a conflict to settle their disputes peacefully and expeditiously in order to avoid the worst possible scenario. Lack of confidence and fear of other States are factors that prompt States to acquire weapons. Although the settlement of political conflict is always difficult, we hope that a consolidation of confidence among Governments can be achieved. We believe that those countries that have the power to do so must bring their weight to bear in the resolution of conflicts. States must also be linked by solid economic and social ties, since that provides a means of building peace and security among States. The tighter the economic ties, the tighter the political links.

Qatar is resolutely dedicated to the Charter of the United Nations and to legislation to ban proliferation and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. We have therefore signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We urge all States that have not yet done so to accede to these conventions in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

We support the efforts of the international community to deal with the issue of anti-personnel landmines, which are time bombs and continue to pose problems over long periods of time. The international conferences convened to study this problem attest to the serious nature of the problem of mines which may be triggered at any time. Qatar was one of the first States to sign the Convention.

Qatar continues to urge the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. That hope remains far from being fulfilled, since just one State — Israel — will not respect this principle. To date is has refused to accede to and sign the relevant treaties and conventions, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We appeal to the international community to exert pressure on Israel so that it will place its nuclear installations under the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. All the States of the region would be negatively affected by the consequences of a nuclear explosion. The media has made us aware of the dangers of nuclear radiation leaks. We therefore urge the international community to consider this problem and to contribute to a settlement to ensure stability and balance in this region, which could explode at any moment.

Mr. Chong (Singapore): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to as Chairman. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your able leadership, we will be able to bring our work to an efficient and effective conclusion.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-

General, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, and his team, for their dedicated support for our work.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered two days ago by Myanmar on behalf of the States members of ASEAN, the Association of South-East Asian Nations. We would also like to express our deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims of the 11 September attacks. We condemn such acts of terrorism, and we join other delegations in reaffirming our support for the important resolutions passed by the General Assembly and the Security Council against terrorism.

Even as we welcome the new spirit of international cooperation against terrorism, we believe that there is a need to reflect upon recent events and to see what lessons we can learn. Prior to 11 September, most people would not have imagined fuel-laden passenger aircraft being converted into flying bombs and used to such devastating impact. Convenient airport check-ins and commercially available flight instruction made it easier for the perpetrators to carry out their acts. The misuse of crop dusters, as well as licenses to transport hazardous materials, are other chilling elements that might have formed part of the dark plans of the terrorists. In short, we saw how everyday objects and processes could be used not for their original, intended purposes, but as deadly tools of terror. There is a law of unintended consequences at work here.

Likewise, we need to be mindful of unintended consequences in the field of disarmament. Disarmament is much more complex than many would like to admit. As we all know, disarmament treaties can have wide-ranging and long-lasting consequences. Once concluded, disarmament treaties are not easily revoked. We therefore need to exercise due diligence to ensure that the measures we put in place today and their consequences do not end up undermining our security needs in the longer term.

I should like to illustrate this point by recalling a fable told by Sir Winston Churchill more than 70 years ago. Once upon a time, the animals in the zoo decided to have disarmament talks. The rhinoceros wanted to prohibit teeth, but he argued that horns were defensive and should be allowed. He was supported by the buffalo, the stag and even the porcupine. But the tiger, the lion and the whole tribe of cats took a different view. They said teeth and claws were honourable weapons of immemorial antiquity and should be preserved. Then the bear spoke and proposed that both teeth and horns should be banned. In fact, it would be quite enough if animals could give each other a friendly hug to resolve their quarrels. He said no one could object to that fraternal gesture. But all the other animals were very offended by this suggestion. The discussion got very heated and angry, and the animals soon forgot about all the peaceful intentions that had brought them together in the first place. Fortunately, the zookeepers arrived and were able to persuade the animals to return to their cages. And the interesting thing is: before long, the animals began to feel quite friendly towards one another once again.

Times may have changed, but the truths contained in this little tale are still relevant today. Naturally, we support the use of multilateral frameworks to regulate disarmament efforts. But we need to understand that successful arms control is not simply a matter of "less equals best". Recent events have reminded us that we live in an unpredictable world, and we need to prepare for unthinkable eventualities. While we all share a vision of a world free from the scourge of war and deadly weaponry, this is, sadly, an ideal that will not be realized soon.

So long as we live in an imperfect world, there is still the need for States to defend themselves. This right to self-defence cannot be compromised. Forcing a less-is-best fix onto an inappropriate set of circumstances can upset an existing balance and undermine the very security we intend to promote and the very confidence we seek to build. And sometimes, horns, teeth and cages are necessary defences in order to maintain peace and harmony.

At the same time, we must realize that disarmament cannot be conducted in a vacuum but is inextricably linked to the prevailing security environment. Without the requisite conditions for security, including socio-economic development, it is impossible for disarmament efforts to bring forth genuine fruits of peace. Moreover, just as the bear, the tiger and the rhinoceros are very different creatures in Churchill's story, so too are the nations of the world. Disarmament efforts conducted in isolation, without adequate regard for the particular differences between States' historical experiences and contexts, will not lead to greater confidence. Worse, they may even undermine security.

Should we then cease our disarmament negotiations? Certainly not. But we need to adopt a more thoughtful and considered approach to our work. We could surely benefit from a more flexible approach, as unexpected events, like what we witnessed last month, can easily alter all our strategic considerations. Following the tragic events of 11 September, should all States that have commercial airliners overflying their territory also invest in fighter jets capable of escorting, and if necessary, bringing down airliners converted into guided missiles? This is an exaggeration, but the point remains: we have to be flexible and be prepared to challenge our existing security paradigms.

In the same vein, we need to go about our deliberations in a more comprehensive manner. Therefore, we cannot be fixated only on the trendy disarmament issues of the day, but must realign our priorities to focus on the difficult, yet critical issues of weapons of mass destruction, disarmament and non-proliferation. We do not doubt that these are thorny issues. Some processes, like nuclear disarmament, have bedevilled negotiators for decades. Others, such as the accession of all countries to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), as well as the establishment of a verification protocol for the BWC, remain unfinished. Nevertheless, the potential for massive casualties in just one strike by a weapon or weapons of mass destruction, especially if such weapons are acquired by terrorists or extremists, makes it imperative for us to persevere. In this regard, we join others in urging the redoubling of efforts towards the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

As I conclude, let us remind ourselves to re-examine our approaches to disarmament. Let us not look for quick fixes, which may carry inadvertent consequences, but for truly enduring solutions to complex problems. We are here to help make the world a safer place — a world where we do not need to live in insecurity or in fear of instant annihilation. We have all been reminded that the world we live in and the peace that we desire are both extremely fragile. Let us keep that thought in our minds as we embark on the task ahead.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that your vast experience and diplomatic skills will guide our work to a successful conclusion. Our congratulations also go to other members of the Bureau. I would like to assure you that you can count on the cooperation of my delegation. I also wish to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his comprehensive statement, which is very helpful to our deliberations.

We are meeting against the background of the terrorist attacks of 11 September that caused thousands of deaths in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. Our sympathies go to all the victims and our heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of the United States of America.

Once again, we condemn these attacks in the strongest terms. Having suffered a terrorist attack in 1998 by the same terrorist group, Tanzania joins the international community in its fight against terrorism. We believe that since terrorism has no race, religion or nationality it is imperative that the international community coordinate its actions so it can be able to dismantle and neutralize the terrorists and their activities.

Let me now turn to the agenda item under discussion. Nuclear disarmament remains one of the highest priorities of the international community. Nuclear weapons, by their power of destruction, continue to pose the gravest danger to human existence and its civilization. It is regrettable, however, that the outlook for such disarmament in the near future remains bleak. This can be attributed to a number of reasons, including a lack of commitment on the part of nuclear-weapon States to the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a time frame. Furthermore, the continued reliance on the doctrine of deterrence by nuclear-weapon States is contributory.

The process of bilateral nuclear disarmament is at a standstill, as no progress is being made. Although the START II Treaty was fully ratified more than a year ago, no appreciable efforts are being made for the initiation of START III.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding the successful conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the future of the non-proliferation regime hangs in the balance. We had hoped that the Conference would give a new momentum to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. This was after nuclear-weapon States had made an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is disappointing that these commitments have not been translated into action or even a promise to act.

We call on the nuclear-weapon States to gather the necessary political will to seriously implement the 13 steps as agreed to in the Final Document of the Conference.

Tanzania's position on negative security assurances has remained consistent. We believe that such assurances are essential steps pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this context, we once again call on nuclear-weapon States to embark on negotiations leading to legally binding arrangements to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm its strong support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among the States concerned. Today more than a hundred countries are covered by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. Not only are those Treaties consistent with efforts towards global disarmament, but they also serve as instruments for strengthening peace and security.

We believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones will continue to play a big role in achieving the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. In this connection, we support efforts being made to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. In the same vein, we support Mongolia's declaration of a single-State nuclear-weapon free zone.

My country attaches great importance to the eradication of other weapons of mass destruction, namely chemical and biological weapons. We commend the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are concerned, however, by financial constraints facing the OPCW stemming from the failure by some States parties to pay their contributions on time. We urge all parties to give the OPCW the necessary support, including payment of their assessed contributions, to enable it to discharge its obligations as mandated.

The failure by the Ad Hoc Committee to reach consensus on strengthening the verification protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is regrettable and disappointing, particularly after more than six years of negotiations. It is our hope that the BWC Review Conference scheduled for later this year will salvage the draft protocol.

Tanzania shares the concern of the international community about the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. These weapons continue to cause great suffering to innocent civilians, particularly women and children. In addition, small arms play a big role in terrorism, drug trafficking, common and organized crime and other criminal actions. We are pleased to note the global awareness about the problem and the efforts being made at all levels in the international arena to combat small arms.

In this regard, the adoption of a Programme of Action by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2001, is welcome. We believe that this is a big step on the long road towards a world free of the scourge of small arms.

Despite these positive developments, my delegation wishes to emphasize the importance and urgency of prohibiting the supply of such weapons to non-State actors.

With regard to anti-personnel landmines, my delegation welcomes the Managua Declaration, adopted by the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. Indeed, the achievements recorded since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention are clear testimony that words can be matched with deeds.

It is gratifying to note that a considerable amount of land has been cleared of anti-personnel mines and also that casualty rates in many of the most mine-affected States have fallen. It is also comforting to note that victim assistance has improved.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our support for the United Nations and restate Tanzania's belief that it is the only universal forum for charting the best course towards our goals and objectives. Let us, therefore, all work together to advance the goals that we collectively subscribe to in the search for international peace, security and development.

Mr. Sun Suon (Cambodia): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Cambodia, may I join previous speakers in warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this

Committee. My felicitations are also extended to the members of the Bureau.

My delegation wishes also to extend our appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his statement.

Cambodia aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Myanmar speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

The debate on the issues of disarmament and global security, at the beginning of this century, continues to be among the highest priorities on the United Nations agenda. Although the world community has made great efforts towards identifying the issues concerned and seeking common ground in gradually developing the disarmament process, the path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons is still elusive. While the international community has intensified efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, military expenditure has continued to grow, along with a global sense of insecurity. The United Nations continues to face complex challenges in pursuit of its goal of enhancing peace and international security.

The continued existence of wars and conflicts that plague many parts of the world remains a matter of great focus and preoccupation for the world community. In addition, the magnitude of the damage and devastation caused by the unprecedented terrorist attacks, which are unjustifiable, has drawn our deep concern to the newest and gravest challenges to peace and international security. Once again, to the host country, the families of the victims and other nations that lost citizens, we offer our deepest sympathy. The work of our Committee must certainly take on ever greater significance in challenging this new type of unconventional threat to mankind, given the new context created by these horrendous attacks.

In this regard, I fully concur with the view of the Secretary-General, complemented by you, Mr. Chairman, that these cruel and violent events make the work of the United Nations for peace, disarmament, non-proliferation and security more important than ever. We must stand in unity and strive to strengthen closer cooperation among nations and restrain any possible threats of terrorism by the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We must also resolve to work towards achieving universality of the relevant treaties.

The delegation of Cambodia is of the view that in the post-cold-war era, a strategic vision on disarmament matters based on mutual arrangements should reflect a new reality where humanity as a whole is concentrating its efforts on advancing its global agenda for peace, development and social progress. We anticipate that the recent dialogue between the major Powers on a number of disarmament issues, in particular on national missile defence, will diminish their differences and pave the way towards maintaining global peace and stability. While looking forward to that progress, Cambodia stresses the importance of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), which plays a crucial role in ensuring strategic stability in the current nuclear arms control regime. We look forward to the implementation of START II, in the hope and expectation that negotiations on START III will commence very soon.

Cambodia is pleased to take note of the successful conclusion, last year, of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We believe that the new package of undertakings adopted by consensus at the Conference constitutes a milestone in the pursuit of enhancing and reinvigorating the NPT review process. As a party to the NPT, Cambodia welcomes that positive outcome, in the expectation that the reaffirmation by States with nuclear capacity of their commitment to article VI will be translated into concrete action. We stress the importance of implementing the recommendations of the Conference and of achieving the universality of the NPT in effectively ensuring disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, its entry into force still remains an important political challenge. As a State party to the CTBT, Cambodia joins the international community's efforts to bring the Treaty into force. We are pleased with the progress made so far by the CTBT Organization, which is evident in the increase in the number of parties to the Treaty, particularly among nuclear Powers. In the light of the overwhelming interest, we therefore call upon those countries, in particular the nuclear-capable States that have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT, to do so as a matter of priority in the interest of the practical attainment of the objectives of the Treaty.

Since the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty — the object of much concern — have reached a stalemate, my delegation would like to encourage the States members of the Conference on Disarmament to resume substantive negotiations on such a treaty, which would be an important step towards compliance with provisions of the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference.

In the light of the progress made in negotiations on a draft protocol on verification of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), we look forward to the fifth review of the BWC, to take place in November this year. We stress also the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its significant role in the elimination of the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction.

In the context of small arms, the delegation of Cambodia shares the grave concern expressed by the world community at the excessive accumulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons spread throughout many parts of the world. Having gone through its own experience, Cambodia fully recognizes the devastating consequences of weapons of that kind, which cripple a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic development efforts. The lack of a framework of binding norms and global standards to curb the illicit trade and use of small arms and light weapons is of great concern; this is something which the world community must continue to address in the decades ahead.

The struggle against the illicit proliferation of small arms requires international cooperation. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the recent conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which we consider as the first, most important step taken by the world community to address that important issue. Although the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference did not fully meet expectations, it nonetheless provides guidelines for practical action by the international community at the national, regional and global levels. For our part, we would like to reaffirm our full cooperation to make the world a more secure and safer place.

Over the years, Cambodia has been making strides in the struggle against the proliferation of small arms. Its achievements to date indicate that 50 per cent of the more than 111,000 units of collected weapons and associated ammunition of all kinds have been destroyed in public ceremonies under the slogan "Flames for peace".

As a country that has suffered a great deal from landmines, Cambodia attaches great importance to that particular issue. The escalating number of cases of the proliferation and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines around the globe demands global attention. Since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention in 1999, we have noted with interest the progressive steps taken by the world community in the fight against landmines. We are also pleased to note the outcome of the recent Third Meeting of States Parties, which took place in September at Managua, particularly with regard to the adoption of a number of measures and recommendations with a view to implementing the relevant articles of the Convention. We observe with satisfaction the progress made so far, especially with respect to efforts by countries to deal with the elimination of anti-personnel landmines, including the reduction of mine accidents and a decrease in the number of mine producers. In spite of some achievements, however, we believe that landmines continue to threaten many countries and people throughout the world and undermine their efforts to achieve economic and development progress. Hence, continued assistance and increased financial support are needed to further tackle these humanitarian problems.

The landmine issue is one of the topmost priorities on the national agenda of the Royal Government. Although progress has been made, our pursuit of the eradication of anti-personnel mines remains essential, with the continued assistance so generously provided by the world community. We believe that the universality of the Convention will effectively contribute to the elimination of these cowardly weapons.

Cambodia constantly supports initiatives undertaken at the regional and subregional levels towards disarmament and to promote security and confidence-building measures among States and within regions. We believe that transparency in armaments and conventional arms reductions would further strengthen those initiatives. As a member of the Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Cambodia remains committed to helping promote confidence-building among the Forum's member States for the sake of peace and stability. This year, as part of our contribution to that effort, Cambodia joined the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In February of this year, with assistance from Canada and Japan, Cambodia organized an ASEAN Regional Forum seminar on conventional weapons transfers as a contribution to the process of promoting confidence-building measures in the region. We also published a white paper on national defence, which reflects the defence policies and strategies of Cambodia to that purpose.

We welcome efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in many parts of the world as a contribution to the enhancement of global peace and international security. As a State member of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-weapon-free Zone — the so-called Bangkok Treaty — we take note of the recent consultations held at Hanoi in May this year, which related to the process of negotiations between ASEAN and nuclear Powers. We urge continued process with a view to the accession by all nuclear Powers to the Protocol of the Bangkok Treaty.

The international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda remains both long and challenging. To complete it, we need moral and political will by all States, based on a culture of peace. The nuclear Powers must take leadership in advancing the cause of disarmament issues — not by word, but by deed.

In the light of the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration adopted last year by our leaders, we urge all Member States to undertake continued negotiations within the framework of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies, leading to total nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. That stems not only from moral but from legal aspects of our obligations, which have been duly enshrined in the Charter and which were unanimously endorsed in the July 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

Cambodia supports the proposed convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament, which we consider to be a unique multilateral forum, should resume its negotiations to overcome the paralysis it is facing and should function adequately through a comprehensive programme of work to be established on the relevant disarmament agenda.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate that Cambodia is committed to the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Its commitment to general and total disarmament stems not only from its adherence to international treaties, but also from its constitutional obligations — which it abides by faithfully — to join the global efforts aimed at ensuring security and peace throughout the world.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to tell you, Sir, how happy my delegation and I are to see you presiding over the First Committee. Your experience in disarmament and your recognized skills augur well for a satisfactory outcome to our work. To you and the other members of the Bureau, we extend our warm congratulations. We must mention also the outstanding qualities of your predecessor, Ambassador Mya Than, whose work at the head of the Committee during its fifty-fifth session was unanimously hailed. Finally, we are grateful to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory statement and his clarifications.

Of course, as we have done on numerous occasions, we express once again our condolences to the delegation of the United States following the tragedy of 11 September — one month ago.

Taking up the subject of our debate, we should immediately make it clear that my delegation is in solidarity with the statements made by South Africa, on behalf of the non-aligned countries, and by Mali, on behalf of the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The end of the cold war could have led us to believe that an ultimate settlement of the issue of disarmament would be reached. Such is not the case. Indeed, on the contrary, and paradoxically, the resulting unipolarity seems even to have given a renewed impetus to the possession of strike forces, including nuclear, for since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the club of nuclear-weapon countries, far from shrinking, has dangerously expanded.

There is therefore now an imperative need to achieve a just solution to this issue. To this end — like other countries — Burkina Faso has set itself the objective of general and complete disarmament under international control — an objective that should be pursued using a carefully balanced approach, accompanied by consistent measures.

It is clear, however, that initiatives to achieve general and complete disarmament can only succeed in a calm international climate conducive to confidence — in other words, one in which there is respect for commitments resulting from international agreements and arrangements. That atmosphere of calm — this must be both emphasized and deplored — is far from a reality, given the present international situation. Indeed, various aspects of disarmament have still not been resolved, and therefore cause great concern.

The spread of small arms and light weapons, despite the measures taken by Governments, has been on the rise, in particular in Africa, and therefore has been threatening the stability of States themselves. It is regrettable, that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons ran up against such basic problems as the sale of arms to groups that are not recognized by States.

The control of anti-personnel mines is also a critical issue. For example, in many developing countries, mines are a hindrance to farming and many other socio-economic activities.

I return to the issue of nuclear weapons, where the present state of affairs cannot dispel our fears. The hopes raised by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) have virtually disappeared, in view of the stated intention of certain States parties to renounce it. Implementation of the START process has become bogged down, and implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has made no more progress. The same is true of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), despite the decisions taken at the 2000 Review Conference.

As for the Conference on Disarmament, it has made no progress for several years now, being unable to adopt an agenda that will permit an effective start to its work.

We can therefore note that the overall situation is discouraging.

The potential solutions to this negative trend include — and this is essential — strengthening the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, in particular the Centre in Togo, which covers the West African region. While we welcome the creation of these Centres, whose usefulness has been proved, we are concerned to see that they function properly. We therefore urge the international community to give them the necessary resources.

I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that Burkina Faso will continue to join in United Nations efforts within the framework of measures planned to settle the issue of disarmament. Action has already been taken to harmonize national legislation with those treaties to which Burkina Faso is a party.

Moreover, as one of the non-aligned countries, Burkina Faso fully supports the appeal of the Non-Aligned Movement for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We hope that this conference — urgently needed now, more than ever — will lead to measures that will ultimately limit and, we hope, totally eliminate arms.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): My delegation, like others, congratulates you, Sir, very sincerely on your appointment as Chairman of this Committee. We look forward to working closely with you over the coming weeks.

Let me reiterate Australia's deep sympathy and solidarity with all those who suffered as a result of the atrocious terrorist attacks on 11 September. As these tragic events have demonstrated so dramatically, threats to international peace and security are not limited to wars between States, nor indeed to the kinds of dangers that existing arms control and disarmament mechanisms have sought to address. However, this should not discourage our multilateral efforts to promote peace and security. Rather, these terrible acts should serve as a catalyst for a renewed commitment by the international community to enhance cooperation, by strengthening existing multilateral mechanisms and by devising effective ways to address new security challenges.

The terrorist attacks in the United States have provoked speculation about the possible use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons by a terrorist group. We can no longer assume that terrorist groups are not prepared to use such weapons. As the Secretary-General outlined in his address on 1 October, there is much United Nations Member States can do, collectively and individually, to prevent any future terrorist attacks from being carried out with weapons of mass destruction.

The threat posed by nuclear weapons is not new, but there is a lot of work still to be done in preventing their spread and working towards their elimination. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the foundation for these efforts. The outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference was a significant step forward. It is important that we now work towards a successful 2005 NPT Review Conference that will involve a fair and balanced review across the range of NPT activities.

Since the 2000 NPT Review Conference, some impatience has been expressed about the rate of progress in implementing the Conference outcome. Yet we should not disregard the significant progress achieved to date in the reduction of nuclear arsenals, although this progress may not have been entirely uniform. The 2005 NPT Review Conference will again provide an important opportunity for the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate commitment to meeting their article VI obligations and the undertakings given at the 2000 Review Conference.

But the task is not one for the nuclear-weapon States alone. It is equally important that non-nuclear-weapon States — and for that matter States outside the NPT — contribute to a climate conducive to nuclear arms reductions by reinforcing the non-proliferation regime; more so given that the terrorist atrocities we have witnessed could one day involve weapons of mass destruction.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is, of course, another key element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework. The coming CTBT article XIV Conference is an opportunity for the international community to send a strong message of support for the Treaty.

It is disappointing the Treaty is not yet in force. But with 161 signatories and 79 ratifiers, there should be no doubt that the CTBT has firmly established a powerful international norm against nuclear testing. Australia encourages all ratifiers to consider what action they might take to promote the CTBT's entry into force. Australia, for example, recently made a further round of diplomatic representations to Asia-Pacific countries and annex 2 countries whose ratification is required for entry into force, and we will continue our efforts to this end. We once again urge those yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so without delay. Until the Treaty enters into force, the existing moratoriums on nuclear testing must be maintained.

The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty is one of the most urgent disarmament and non-proliferation steps the international community should take, as reaffirmed by the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We are deeply disappointed that another Conference on Disarmament ended this year without a start to cut-off negotiations, despite the efforts of several States to build support for negotiations. In this regard, in May this year, Australia co-sponsored, with Japan, a workshop on the role and significance of the cut-off treaty. Prior to the start of formal negotiations, Australia sees value in further informal work along these lines outside the Conference on Disarmament. Pending negotiation of a cut-off treaty, we call upon all relevant States to join a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Universal implementation of the strengthened safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is another key non-proliferation priority. Achieving this objective would substantially boost the mutual confidence-building essential for national, regional and international security. It would contribute significantly to a climate favourable to further cuts in nuclear arms. We are pleased to have been the first country to ratify and implement an additional protocol and urge all States yet to take this important step to do so as quickly as possible. Australia is helping a number of regional countries to ratify and implement additional protocols.

Australia remains strongly committed to the global bans on chemical and biological weapons. The practical and normative value of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is clear. The moral and political force of the CWC will be enhanced by the full implementation and universalization of the Treaty. Australia urges countries which have not signed or ratified the CWC to do so as soon as possible. It is vital also that the OPCW function in an effective manner. Australia is committed to working with the Director General and other States parties to resolve the OPCW's current financial and administrative problems. Reforms must be carried through effectively, and the Organization's core verification activities must be preserved.

We are disappointed that a protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has not been achieved after more than six years of negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group. Australia strongly supported the Chairman's composite text as a valuable, if imperfect, means of strengthening the BWC. In our view, the draft protocol would have provided security benefits for all. Now, it is vital that momentum towards strengthening the BWC be renewed, and this must begin at the Fifth BWC Review Conference in November. Australia urges all States to enhance their efforts to strengthen the BWC with practical and effective international measures.

There remains much to be done, but we should not forget that the past year has seen some notable achievements. Australia welcomes the adoption of the Programme of Action at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held earlier this year. The Programme of Action includes 85 practical measures for addressing the problems posed by small arms. We must now fully implement the Programme. Australia's efforts will focus on encouraging implementation of the Programme in our own region. A key objective will be to support the development of model legislation for a common approach to weapons control in the South Pacific, and to continue to provide practical assistance to facilitate more effective control over weapons stockpiles.

Australia also welcomes the strong growth in the number of States which have joined the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines over the past year. We remain firmly committed to the universalization of the Convention and are working closely with States parties and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines to promote the Convention, with a particular focus on the South-East Asian region. As the deadline for stockpile destruction draws near for many countries, we will also be working as co-chair of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction to support this important obligation under the Convention.

Australia is pleased — indeed, proud — that its Ambassador for Disarmament, Mr. Luck, my colleague in Geneva, has been nominated as President-designate of the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to be held in Geneva in December this year. We welcome the progress made at the three meetings of the Preparatory Commission and look forward to working cooperatively with all States parties at the Review Conference as we consider a range of proposals to strengthen, or build on, the Convention's existing provisions. Australia is committed to the universalization of the CCW and calls on all those countries which have yet to accede to the Convention and its protocols to take the opportunity of the Review Conference to do so.

The spread of technology associated with the means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction also threatens security. Australia shares the view that the proliferation of missiles, in particular long-range missiles capable of delivering weapons-of-mass-destruction payloads, is inherently destabilizing for regional and global security.

Australia strongly supports the adoption by the international community of an International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We are pleased to be associated with the development of an augmented draft Code at the recent Missile Technology Control Regime meeting in Ottawa. The Code represents a genuine effort to increase transparency in relation to missile activities and to build confidence regarding the peaceful intentions of States. The Code will now be circulated among the international community for further negotiation and finalization ahead of a proposed adoption conference in late 2002. We urge all States to subscribe to the Code as an important signal of the international community's commitment to ballistic missile non-proliferation. As a participant in the United Nations panel of experts on missiles, Australia is also working in that forum to develop practical recommendations to guide the international community's efforts to combat proliferation.

Australia, like all nations, was shocked by the events of 11 September. In the face of threats to international security, our communities need to know that Governments are cooperating to protect them. It is vital, therefore, that our multilateral institutions work well and that international arms control and non-proliferation efforts continue to contribute to global and regional stability and security.

In a time of uncertainty, we must not falter. In this Committee we must be guided by the goal of mobilizing international support for practical measures to address existing, new and emerging threats to security. The Australian delegation looks forward to supporting you, Mr. Chairman, and working with other delegations to this end.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, for your election to the presidency of the Committee, and congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Rest assured that the delegation of Paraguay will make every effort to help you to ensure the success of our important work.

First, my delegation fully endorses the statement made by Ambassador Valdés, the Permanent Representative of Chile, on behalf of the Rio Group.

The events of 11 September warned us most tragically that the fight against terrorism must be one of the greatest priorities of the international community, and therefore of this Organization, without the other issues on our agenda being neglected. On the occasion of the examination in plenary of item 166 of the agenda, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", Paraguay vigorously expressed its condemnation of all acts that threaten international peace and security, wherever they originate, called on all members of the international community to find a sure response in confronting and eradicating terrorism, dedicating all efforts to taking effective collective measures to prevent and eradicate threats to peace, as stated in our Charter.

The delegation of Paraguay reaffirms this position and underlines the urgent need to take measures to control and eradicate any element that imperils peace and security or could be used to perpetrate terrorist attacks. In these last few days, we have observed with concern that conventional arms are already within the reach of terrorists and that they do not hesitate to use them in pursuing their ominous goals.

We must redouble our efforts to control the proliferation of conventional weapons. But at the same time, we must not lose sight of the great risks posed by the possibility that terrorists might use weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, employed as elements of terror, creating an almost unthinkable scenario. Therefore, the strengthening of the legal framework that must control the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons is of the greatest urgency and necessity for the international community.

It is of fundamental importance that we strengthen the multilateral legal framework that regulates the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this respect, we reiterate the need for States to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we draw attention to the upcoming Second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty. I can report here that Paraguay, for its part, recently ratified this all-important multilateral instrument. In the coming days, it will deposit its instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General.

Similarly, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, another essential international agreement to which Paraguay is also party, must be acceded to by the international community. In the regional sphere, Paraguay has always taken part in all the discussions on actions to maintain peace and security. One sign of that is the Republic of Paraguay being a party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which created the first nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We also believe in the need to achieve as quickly as possible universal adhesion to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

At the same time, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons worries the Government of Paraguay. In this respect, a draft bill was presented in the National Congress to regulate the importing and exporting of these weapons, establishing punishments for perpetrators of illicit activities. However, there is in effect now an executive order which fixes norms for the acquisition, manufacture, possession, transportation and all legal acts related to firearms, gun powder, explosives and like materials.

In this respect, I wish to emphasize that Paraguay does not produce arms, and that since 1997 it has gradually but substantially reduced its imports of firearms and munitions for civilian use, reaching by this year a level of zero per cent imports.

Finally, Paraguay express its firm will to continue cooperating with the efforts to prevent, combat and totally eliminate anything that puts at risk the well-being of the peoples, their social and economic development and their right to live in peace.

Mr. Onobu (Nigeria): At the start, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. We are confident that under your guidance, our Committee will achieve its set objectives at this session of the General Assembly.

First, I wish to express the heartfelt sympathy of the delegation of Nigeria to the Government and people of our host country over the tragic events of 11 September 2001. We reaffirm our support for the resolutions that have been passed so far by the United Nations condemning this vile act.

Given the callousness of this heinous crime and the continuing menace of terrorism, it has become particularly urgent to give effect to the commitment of Member States, as reflected in the Millennium Declaration, to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The events of the past few weeks have clearly underscored the grave danger humanity faces if terrorists were to gain access to nuclear as well as chemical and biological weapons.

My delegation therefore believes that one area in which the world has to speak with one voice and act in concert is disarmament and international security. In the broad spectrum of the challenges faced by humanity, such as global epidemics, regional conflicts, poverty, racism and terrorism, the existence of weapons of mass destruction poses the greatest threat to human survival. Unfortunately, the disarmament and security challenges we face today have not diminished, as commitments have remained largely unmet.

A year after the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), during which the nuclear-weapon States gave an unequivocal commitment to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals, no progress has been recorded. It will be recalled that a series of practical measures was agreed upon with the goal of making systematic and steady progress towards nuclear disarmament. Some of the measures include: pledges of no first use of nuclear weapons between nuclear-weapon States; legally binding security assurances of non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; and cancellation of the nuclear weapon state of alert and the separation of nuclear war heads from their delivery systems. It is our hope that some of those measures can still be effected before our next preparatory meeting, to be held in 2002.

We note with concern the growing controversy surrounding the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems. We are of the view that the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) is important for the promotion and maintenance of international stability. We also believe that it offers a basis for future reductions in offensive strategic weapons. We therefore appeal to all States to refrain from taking measures that could trigger a new arms race.

Nigeria has always been in the forefront of the opposition to nuclear tests. As far back as the early 1960s, we opposed the nuclear tests then being conducted in the Sahara. We have ever since remained committed to the comprehensive ban of all forms of testing. We believe that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards are integral pillars sustaining the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime of the NPT. We believe that the CTBT provides a credible framework for securing the world against the threat of nuclear weapons.

As an earnest of Nigeria's irrevocable commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world, President Olusegun Obasanjo signed the CTBT in the course of the Millennium Summit last year. We have also signed the instrument of ratification, which has been deposited with the Secretary-General. Nigeria is thus prepared to cooperate with the provisional secretariat of the CTBT Organization to achieve the early entry into force of the Treaty. In that regard, we would like to urge all States, especially those States whose ratification is required for the entry into force of the Treaty, to make a concerted effort to ratify it.

Nigeria's non-proliferation credentials include the signing and ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have also signed the instrument of accession to the Anti-personnel Mines Convention and have ratified the African Nuclear-weapon-free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Pelindaba. In ratifying the Pelindaba Treaty, we have reaffirmed our belief that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important disarmament measure that promotes regional peace and security in the world.

The existence of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone reflects the resolve of the States of the region to achieve the goals not only of regional peace but also of legitimate access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We therefore urge Member States which have yet to ratify the Treaty to do so to make possible its early entry into force. We support the initiative to strengthen similar regimes in the regions of the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Bangkok. It is our hope that the efforts to establish a similar zone in Central Asia will soon be realized.

Nigeria wishes to draw attention to the inherent dangers posed to Member States by the transboundary movement and the dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes. Concerned at the growing incidence of that phenomenon, my delegation worked for the Organization of African Unity's adoption in 1988 of a resolution on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste. In the light of the persistence of that problem, the African Group will again submit a draft resolution on it at this session of the General Assembly.

Coming from a region that has experienced the devastation that small-arms-induced conflicts have wreaked on our societies, Nigeria believes that the July United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects could not have taken place at a more opportune time. The convening of the Conference was an acknowledgement of the often devastating impact of small arms and light weapons on the well-being of many developing countries. It was also an affirmation of the desire of the international community to deal with the problem of the growing illicit trade in those weapons. The outcome document of the July Conference on small arms and light weapons contained elements which underscored the determination of the international community to deal, at all levels, with the dangers posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

My delegation would like to underscore the importance of the call on the international community to render technical and financial assistance to regional and national efforts aimed at eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We also support the call for the creation of a small arms fund to assist States in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference. We also wish to support the call for a review conference in 2006 and for biennial meetings of States to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Clearly, the need for a legally binding instrument to deal with the menace of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons cannot be overemphasized. We remain convinced of the need to prohibit the sale and transfer of small arms and light weapons to so-called non-State actors. Given the clear correlation that exists between the proliferation and accumulation of small arms and light weapons on the one hand and the increasing incidence of conflict situations and crime on the other, we are of the view that the availability of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors further escalates the instability of many developing countries. There is therefore a need for the international community to deal urgently with this matter.

In conclusion, my delegation appeals to all Member States to muster the political will to fulfil their obligations under the various disarmament treaties and conventions, so as to create and sustain a stable and safer world.

Organization of work

The Chairman: Since I have heard so many assurances of full cooperation with the Chair from most, if not all, of the delegations in this room, here is a moment when we can actually translate this into concrete action. If members look at the speakers list for tomorrow and for next week, which will be the last week devoted to the general debate on all items, they will see that tomorrow, Friday, 12 October, we have seven speakers; next Monday we have eight speakers; on Tuesday we have seven; on Wednesday we have nine; and on Thursday we have eight. Friday, 19 October, seems to be clear.

Since I believe we can accommodate 10 or 11 speakers per meeting, it would definitely be advisable and very useful if delegations whose names are inscribed on the list of speakers — including on Thursday, 18 October, which is scheduled to be the very last day of general debate — would consider making their statements at an earlier date so that consultations among delegations could take place not only on Friday, 19 October, but also on Thursday, 18 October, in view of the next phase of our work in the First Committee, which, as delegations may remember, will be devoted to thematic discussions and the presentation of drafts.

It would be good and, I believe, useful, if we had two days at our disposal before beginning the thematic discussion and the presentation of drafts. That would allow us to gain full knowledge of where we stood. Delegations could consult each other on common language and common understandings during those days, which could be at our disposal. I believe that there should be a two-way street. I am therefore asking delegations to take the initiative to look at their schedules and think about making their statements at an earlier time. At the same time, the Secretariat will be checking with those delegations concerned so as to find out whether they can actually do that. I ask delegations to help me in this way. In so doing, they will be helping the First Committee to expedite its work — or, rather, to make full use of time that is available to it in the light of the more critical period that is coming to haunt us next week. I hope that delegations will try not to forget my humble appeal.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.8

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee

8th meeting

Friday, 12 October 2001, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös .... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

The Chairman: This morning I wish to start the proceedings of the First Committee by announcing, as most members of the Committee already know, that the 100th Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations. I congratulate him and am sure that all members will share these congratulations on this well-deserved distinction which has been awarded to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations as an Organization. It is a recognition of the activities of the United Nations and also, I would like to stress, of the future relevance of the United Nations in the world. I am very pleased to be able to make this announcement. In our future activities, including in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, we should all take heart from this recognition.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations.

This is indeed a proud day for the United Nations, a day on which the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Organization as a whole have been awarded the centenary Nobel Peace Prize in signal recognition of their contribution to a better-organized and more peaceful world. On behalf of the Caribbean Community, let me join you, Mr. Chairman, in congratulating the Secretary-General and the men and women of the Organization who, in all parts of the world, serve the cause of peace.

This award comes at a time when the horrendous acts of terrorism committed on 11 September have left us all shaken and infinitely more aware of our vulnerability, of the fragility of international security and of the need for collective action in the face of unspeakable crimes orchestrated with tools of everyday civilian life. We dare not contemplate the implications for the security of States of the possibility of weapons of mass destruction reaching the hands of unprincipled sponsors of international terrorism who show no respect for human life or for the rule of law. It is our hope that in the wake of these tragic events, and in the wake of the signal award to this Organization, the work of the Committee will be imbued with renewed urgency.

We have witnessed during the past year an ebb in the energy and optimism that infused the Committee's consideration of measures to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. At that time we celebrated the small but significant achievements of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which secured the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States for the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals; and we echoed the Millennium Declaration, which called for concerted action towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We have, however, not seen those rallying

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words transformed into demonstrable action: we still stand short of the achievement of universality in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament; we still anticipate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the Conference on Disarmament has yet again failed to reach agreement to begin negotiation on a fissile material cut-off treaty; and we still pursue security assurances and confidence-building measures to strengthen the regime for the maintenance of international peace and security.

This stalled multilateral disarmament agenda presents a disturbing framework within which we must seek to advance an already tenuous international peace and security agenda. It offers little comfort, particularly to small States such as our own, for the void created by the absence of a strong multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime is inevitably filled by suspicion and distrust, negating confidence-building measures and heightening the intimidation of lawlessness from State and non-State actors. This threat is true in respect not only of nuclear weapons but also of biological and chemical weapons. We share the concerns expressed at the inability of the Ad Hoc Group on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction to advance its work on the elaboration of a draft protocol on verification arrangements. It is our hope that the upcoming Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention will contribute towards strengthening this regime, thus reducing the threat posed by such weapons. We also look forward to participating actively in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Our non-proliferation and disarmament agenda will not advance meaningfully until the inertia in the Conference on Disarmament is overcome. It is disconcerting to receive, year after year, reports of the failure of that important body to agree on a programme of work, precluding substantive consideration of the nuclear disarmament agenda. It is also disappointing that in the debate in this Committee there is rarely mention of the value of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Should we then conclude that political will is exhausted? Recent events do not afford us that option. We should instead make good this opportunity to renew our collective commitment to both nuclear and conventional non-proliferation and disarmament. We welcome the contribution of the Disarmament Commission to this effort through its current deliberation on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. We consider that that body can and should play a more integral, supportive role as a deliberative forum within the disarmament infrastructure of the Organization.

CARICOM States also recognize the important contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones towards strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and in promoting regional security and stability. We maintain that their success is to be found in their establishment on the basis of agreements freely reached among the States of the region concerned. We remain committed to the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), to which we are a party, and encourage the development of mechanisms aimed at promoting cooperation among the zones with a view to ultimately strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

This year's endeavours have not, however, been without success. Of particular importance to CARICOM States was the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That meeting was very welcome as a demonstration of the international community's acknowledgement of the need to urgently address the proliferation and illegal use of these weapons. For vulnerable States such as ours, exposed to this illicit trade often linked to drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, this was a vital undertaking. The increasing threat to the security and stability of our societies and the challenge to our economic and social development are too serious to ignore. CARICOM States take this opportunity once again to express their appreciation to Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodríguez, President of the Conference, and to Ambassador Carlos dos Santos, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, for their skilful management of a sensitive project.

We now look forward to early implementation of measures articulated in the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels, so as to strengthen the global collective effort to stem the flow of these illegal weapons and to rid our societies of their deadly influence. We share the view, however, that the outcome of the Conference represents a first important step on the long journey towards the achievement of truly effective control of this illicit trade. That objective, we believe, will not be attained until we implement measures to regulate the legal trade in small arms and light weapons, including improved monitoring of firearms dealers and secondary markets, the application of more rigorous standards for arms brokers, and strict import and export authorization regimes. We believe that there is a central role for the Secretariat to play in coordinating all United Nations activities concerning small arms, and in this context we welcome the important role that the Department for Disarmament Affairs, through its coordinating mechanism for action on small arms, continues to play in ensuring regular consultation and coordination among all entities within the United Nations system for which the matter of small arms is of integral concern.

CARICOM recommends that these existing mechanisms be strengthened to enhance in-house capacity to undertake more research and analysis on the nature and scope of the problem and to provide practical assistance to affected States. There is still a paucity of data on the small-arms phenomenon. We believe that institutions like the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research should be strengthened with a view to widening the database of information. We also note that the United Nations continues to experience difficulty in recruiting disarmament experts and trainers for service within peacekeeping operations in the field. This need could be addressed in part by encouraging Governments to establish databases of expertise on disarmament to enhance the United Nations capacity when the need arises.

These initiatives will, of course, demand additional resources, both human and financial. CARICOM members were therefore very disappointed that the outcome of the 2001 Conference did not see specific commitment to the investment of new and additional resources. Without the injection of fresh resources our efforts will be significantly compromised. We encourage better coordination among existing small arms funds to ensure maximization of the impact of these resources. We also consider that it would be useful to explore the possibility of working more closely with the United Nations Development Programme to identify areas in which its Trust Fund for Support to Prevention and Reduction of the Proliferation of Small Arms, which involves a weapons-for-development approach, can be of assistance in the disarmament component of peacekeeping operations.

CARICOM States continue to participate actively in regional initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of our States to more effectively control the illegal arms trade and narco-trafficking. Where our subregion is concerned we cannot contemplate solutions to the illicit arms trade without addressing at the same time measures to control the illicit drug trade. Many of these activities are implemented under the sponsorship of the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, often in coordination with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS). We again use this opportunity to convey our appreciation of the support we receive from these organizations.

CARICOM States also note with satisfaction the steady progress achieved in the decreased production of anti-personnel landmines, the destruction of stockpiles, the demining of land and the reduction of casualties from landmine blasts. We consider this an encouraging indication of the commitment of member States to fully implement this Convention, made all the more worthy for its overwhelming humanitarian benefits. We continue to call for more assistance for those States addressing the difficult task of demining and for support for victims of landmine explosions.

CARICOM States will continue to raise in the debates in this Committee their apprehension regarding the safety and environmental risks to which coastal States are exposed by the maritime transportation of nuclear waste and other radioactive material. We place great store on the conclusions and recommendations of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last year regarding the strengthening of measures and international regulations to protect States from such risks. The trans-shipment of irradiated material through the Caribbean Sea is of particular concern, and we continue to call for the cessation of this practice. This position notwithstanding, we again underscore the need for the international community to consider the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory framework promoting State responsibility in such areas as disclosure, liability and compensation in relation to accidents.

Once again we have been offered the opportunity to refocus the disarmament agenda. If we are to move forward we must do so together. That means that we must somehow find the political will to eschew polarization in the disarmament debate and find common ground on which to renew our dialogue. In the search to achieve disarmament and international peace and security, the words of the eminent Caribbean scholar, Sir Shridath Ramphal, ring true:

> "cooperation is no longer merely an option; it is a precondition of life in the global neighbourhood. It is not just a strategic choice; it is a compulsion of civilized existence."

In conclusion, let me convey the congratulations of the member States of CARICOM to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of your Bureau on your election to guide the work of this important Committee. I assure you of the full cooperation of our delegation as you discharge your onerous responsibilities. We also wish to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, and to the staff of the Department for their dedication, demonstrated in the consistently high quality of their work.

Mr. Da Silva (Angola): The Angolan delegation wishes at the outset to extend sincere congratulations to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau upon your election. We are confident, Sir, that with your rich experience and diplomatic skills our deliberations will come to a successful conclusion. You are assured of the support and cooperation of my delegation. My delegation would also like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

At these very difficult times that still characterize the city of New York, as a consequence of the large-scale devastation and loss of human life caused by the 11 September terrorist attack, we consider it important to highlight the fact that terrorists are the common enemies of all societies and do not come from any particular religion, culture or nationality. Angola, like few others, understands the need to adopt measures to prevent and punish acts of terrorism. My country associates itself with Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) and General Assembly resolution 56/1, which express the commitment of the international community to use all the elements at its disposal to eliminate the threat to peace and security that terrorism represents.

Over the past decade in Angola thousands of people have been killed in almost daily terrorist attacks perpetrated by UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi. The continuous attacks by UNITA against the civilian population correspond to the elements that qualify the crime of terrorism. As such, the fight against this scourge must be global and without any type of discrimination. The tragic impact of those UNITA acts on peace, security, stability and development in Angola raises the understanding and solidarity of the international community as well as the recognition that they also constitute a threat to peace and international security. For that reason the Security Council has many times appropriately condemned UNITA's actions by imposing sanctions against it. I appeal to all States to comply strictly with the sanctions imposed on UNITA and to cooperate with the monitoring mechanism for sanctions against UNITA as being within the scope of measures to eliminate international terrorism.

We are fully aware of the close and complex links between terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal exportation of natural resources, and the illegal trafficking and easy availability of small arms and light weapons. At the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the outcome of the consensus was the adoption of a Programme of Action as an important step towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade. It included guidelines for practical action at the national, regional and international levels. Despite our efforts and determination, small arms and light weapons continue to end up in the hands of terrorist groups, rebels and other unlawful elements. The proliferation, misuse and accumulation of those weapons have devastating effects. It is a reality that, as a practical problem of security, small arms and light weapons have a far more direct impact on the everyday lives of people, and cause far more death, injury and economic loss, than weapons of mass destruction. The challenge that faces us is to strengthen cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international levels that can lead us to the full implementation of the measures contained in the Programme of Action.

We share the view that we should continue our discussion at the national, regional and global levels on the need to establish and maintain controls over private ownership of small arms, and the need to prevent sales of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. We cannot possibly reap any success in fighting terrorism if we do not take comprehensive steps to prevent all kinds of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, from falling into the hands of terrorist groups.

The Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction held in Nicaragua from 18 to 21 September, was a success. It contributed to further progress with respect to the universality and implementation of the Convention. The entry into force of the Ottawa Convention represents a significant step forward and underlines the international community's commitment to eliminate the scourge of landmines.

Angola, as a State party to this instrument, is strongly committed to its effective implementation. This is an essential part of the framework aimed at addressing this problem. Angola is also committed to strengthening this framework where it is possible to do so. In our view a transfer ban on anti-personnel landmines would complement and reinforce existing instruments.

Angola has in place a national programme of action against mines, whose objectives are to create an environment in which people can live and work safely and to meet the concerns and priorities of the victims. To reduce the number of victims, the Angolan Government decided to include in the school curriculum programme the subject of mine awareness activities. Nevertheless, we are faced with the problem that in many areas already identified as mine areas, where we have placed signs to avoid more victims, the UNITA rebels, led by Jonas Savimbi, are removing those signs, thus killing more people, mostly children and women, in the same brutal fashion as any act of terrorism. Once again, there is a need for coordinated action by the international community to achieve the complete elimination of anti-personnel landmines.

The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is a matter of universal concern. Angola, as a developing country, is firmly committed to a non-proliferation regime. We continue to pursue with vigour our strong advocacy of general and complete disarmament. In regard to nuclear tests, we remain committed to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which will make a vital contribution to advancing nuclear disarmament by constraining the qualitative improvement in nuclear weapons. Angola supports the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which provides the international community with a clear vision of the steps to be taken in the near future. One of the partial measures identified within the framework of the NPT to ensure constructive and steady progress towards nuclear disarmament remains the entry into force of the CTBT, the parties to which will soon meet here in New York to consider ways to obtain the necessary number of ratifications to accelerate its entry into force.

Angola recognizes the importance of the early entry into force and full implementation of START II and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible, while preserving and retaining the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) as the cornerstone of strategic stability and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons.

Another most important issue is the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. The Conference on Disarmament should start deliberations on this problem at the earliest. The priority should be to establish the subsidiary bodies that will make it possible to fully focus on examining this issue in all its aspects.

In conclusion, I should like to stress that, since the process of disarmament affects the vital security interests of all States, we must all be actively concerned with, and contribute to, the disarmament and arms limitation measures which play an essential role in maintaining and strengthening international security. Therefore, the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament, in accordance with its Charter, must be reinforced.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I join other speakers in expressing my delegation's, and my own personal, warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee, as well as to the members of the Bureau on their election. We have full confidence that, given your vast experience and great expertise on disarmament issues, you will be able to guide our deliberations to a fruitful conclusion. I assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

Let me also extend my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar, a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I should also like to take this opportunity to join you, Mr. Chairman, in warmly congratulating the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the United Nations on being selected to receive this year's Nobel Peace Prize. This is a fitting tribute to the importance and continued relevance of the United Nations and to the sagacious leadership provided by the Secretary-General, notably in the promotion and maintenance of global peace. The award should inspire us all to redouble our efforts to attain the goals we set ourselves as Members of this Organization, including in the area of disarmament.

My delegation associates itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Myanmar, who spoke on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), but would like to make additional remarks on issues of particular interest to Malaysia.

We are all too aware that, despite the so-called peace dividends resulting from the end of the cold war, achievements in the disarmament area have fallen far short of our expectations. Indeed, in the nuclear disarmament area, progress, if any, has been negligible. In fact, instead of progress towards greater disarmament efforts there have been setbacks, with an additional number of nuclear-weapon States, the weakening of existing nuclear disarmament treaties and a virtually complete standstill in negotiations on nuclear disarmament on both the bilateral and multilateral tracks. Therefore the challenge facing the international community as it tries to realize a nuclear-weapon-free world remains formidable, requiring our total and unqualified commitment to the goals we set ourselves. Our final goal must remain the elimination of all these weapons, not at some vague, never-to-be-defined, remote time in the future, which some people interpret as "never", but within a time-frame that, while distant, is nevertheless possible, realistic and attainable. Towards this end, nuclear disarmament should not be relegated to the back burner, as some would prefer, but must remain a high-priority issue on the global agenda.

The mindless, horrific terrorist attacks on the United States, which we have all condemned in the strongest terms, were a shocking and cruel wake-up call for all of us to the danger of international terrorism, to which all countries are vulnerable and which poses the most complex security challenge to our global security today. The incidents reminded us of the fragility of international peace and security and the need for the international community to close ranks in our common effort to ensure that peace and security prevail in the new millennium. In a world that will now have to confront a new, faceless but deadly foe, these events should remind us of the ever-present danger of nuclear terrorism and other weapons of mass destruction. This was recognized by the Secretary-General himself, who aptly told the General Assembly:

> "While the world was unable to prevent the 11 September attacks, there is much we can do to help prevent future terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction". (*A/56/PV.12*)

Let the words of the Secretary-General spur us towards redoubling our efforts to eliminate these weapons.

The States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed at the 2000 Review Conference that there should be no halfway measures in the quest for nuclear disarmament. They concluded that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In addition, the nuclear-weapon States took a positive and commendable step in this direction by making an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament.

It is, however, necessary to remind ourselves that the nuclear disarmament objectives agreed upon in 1995, though modest, have not been attained; hence the need for the concrete implementation of the objectives and principles of the Final Document of 2000 without delay. While it is still too early to determine the fate of the 13 steps to nuclear disarmament agreed at the Review Conference, my delegation hopes that serious efforts will be made to give substance to these undertakings as we approach next year's first Preparatory Committee meeting for the Treaty's 2005 Review Conference. We look forward, therefore, to the realization of the commitment made by the United States and the Russian Federation to work actively to bring about a considerable reduction in their nuclear arsenals. We hope that these will not remain platitudes, mere statements of intent that will be repeated at every review conference of the NPT.

States Parties to the NPT must address the issue of the universality of the Treaty in a more serious fashion. If the universality of the Treaty is to remain a serious and attainable objective, which it should be, every effort must be made to bring those outside the NPT to accede to it, since clearly having them inside the Treaty would be more desirable than leaving them outside. I believe the objective of the universality of the Treaty will be better served by adopting a common-sense, practical and creative approach. In the global campaign for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons, the universality of this Treaty, as well as of other relevant treaties and conventions, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), is an extremely important objective to be attained.

We continue to be dismayed, as we have been for the past several years, at the lack of progress at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The impasse in the Conference is a matter of serious concern to the international community. We strongly urge the three Special Coordinators designated by the Conference to make every effort to break the impasse and move the negotiations forward. Together with the expansion of its membership and the improvement in the efficiency of its functioning, the Conference should make every effort and move to attain its objectives as soon as possible.

National missile defence (NMD) has now become the most hotly debated issue on the world security agenda. The continuing impasse at the Conference on Disarmament has been further complicated by developments in the area of anti-ballistic defence systems, specifically the efforts to develop and deploy the so-called NMD. My delegation shares the Secretary-General's concern over plans to deploy national missile defences, which will inevitably threaten not only current bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements but also ongoing and future disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. A missile defence system will pose serious problems for future progress in arms control, especially deep nuclear reductions.

My delegation believes that the security costs of deployment will far outweigh the security benefits. The deployment of such a system will have a highly destabilizing effect on international security and will most likely lead to a new arms race. That would be a major setback to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We would strongly urge against the development and deployment of the missile defence system, because of its serious ramifications for international security. My delegation would therefore call for a strengthening of the existing Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty while addressing, in more serious fashion, the issue of the threat of global missile proliferation. My delegation is convinced that abrogation of the ABM Treaty would have grave consequences for the future of international security.

My delegation is encouraged by the increase in the number of ratifications of the CTBT during the past year. It remains our hope that the remaining number of the 44 countries stipulated in article XIV will accede to and ratify the Treaty so as to effect its entry into force as soon as possible. Malaysia fully recognizes the importance of universal adherence to the CTBT, and is in the process of ratifying it. However, we believe it is important for the remaining article XIV countries to lead the way.

The historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, given in July 1996, was a major and positive development and a significant contribution by the World Court in the campaign for nuclear disarmament. Regrettably, that Opinion continues to be ignored by the nuclear-weapon States. Malaysia and other like-minded countries will continue efforts for follow-up actions to the Advisory Opinion of the Court at this and future sessions of the General Assembly. We hope that, as in previous years, the draft resolution to be put forward in this Committee will continue to enjoy wide support from Member States of the Organization.

As advances in biotechnology are increasing the potential threat posed by biological weapons, there is an urgent need to speed up the negotiations on a verification regime for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Today the BWC is more significant than ever and the spirit that inspired it is very much alive. However, many years of efforts to conclude a protocol to strengthen this key Treaty have ended abruptly due to the decision of a major negotiating partner which opposes the draft composite text of the protocol that was presented at the twenty-fourth session of the Ad Hoc Group. We also regret that the Group could not even adopt a final report on its work. However, we look forward to the Treaty's next five-year Review Conference, scheduled to convene in Geneva next month, in the hope that it will provide another opportunity to revisit this issue.

It is imperative that those States that have not ratified or acceded to this Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) should do so at the earliest opportunity so that the Conventions' effectiveness will be further enhanced through their universality. We believe this goal is attainable, as these Conventions have made an important contribution towards the world community's collective efforts to eliminate the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

Conventional weapons have become even more sophisticated, and hence more lethal. Thanks to the aggressive marketing efforts of the arms vendors of, mostly, the industrialized countries, these weapons are now in the arsenals of impoverished countries which can ill afford them. In an unprecedented move, the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects that took place in July, adopted a Programme of Action at the end of the Conference. This Conference marked a significant step towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. What remains is for States to fulfil their respective obligations under the Programme of Action. Malaysia believes that the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons must be viewed from a holistic perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development. In the context of conflict situations, the problem should be seen comprehensively in the framework of disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants.

My delegation is proud to announce that Malaysia became the first mine-free country in Asia in January this year, as we have completed our stockpile destruction of anti-personnel landmines and, therefore, accordingly fulfilled our obligations under article 4 of the Ottawa Convention. We remain committed to the attainment of a truly universal ban of anti-personnel landmines. The destruction of almost 95,000 anti-personnel landmines began in mid-January this year and took place at three different locations in Malaysia, using one of the safest and effective methods available. Malaysia is firm in its conviction that humanitarian sufferings caused by anti-personnel landmines far outweigh their military utility. It remains our hope and expectation that there will be a stronger political push for universal acceptance of this Treaty. In this regard, we welcome the positive outcome of the Conference of States Parties held in Managua recently, which will result in the more efficacious implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

Malaysia takes pride in the role it played in shaping the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone along with our partners in ASEAN. The establishment of these zones is an important and integral part of the nuclear disarmament process. We continue to believe that the establishment of these zones in various parts of the world will help to create conditions conducive to peace and stability and to promote regional confidence building. My delegation attaches great importance to the promotion of such zones and strongly supports their establishment in other parts of the world, particularly in West Asia or the Middle East, as called for in the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference and reconfirmed at the 2000 Review Conference.

Malaysia believes in the importance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and strongly supports it. We fully recognize the need for increased transparency in armaments and that the United Nations has an important role in promoting it.

Efforts in respect of conventional weapons, important as they are, should not detract from nuclear disarmament efforts, which should always remain a top priority issue on the international agenda until these horrendous weapons have been completely eliminated from the face of the earth. Malaysia therefore commends the Secretary-General for his call for the convening of an international conference to consider all aspects of the nuclear-weapons issue, and would strongly encourage him to follow up on his laudable proposal. The convening of such a conference will provide an opportunity for the international community to rededicate and recommit itself to the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, leading towards the realization of a world entirely free of nuclear weapons.

Given the formidable challenges ahead of us, we should never relent in the concerted campaign for nuclear disarmament. We should not succumb to creeping complacency or arguments that everything is all right on the disarmament front. In this regard, we acknowledge and highly appreciate the positive role of non-governmental organizations in sustaining global interest in nuclear disarmament issues. Let me commend them for their supportive but important role, which has inspired us to move the disarmament process forward by sharing their knowledge and expertise with us. Malaysia considers them to be indispensable partners in a common cause. They are truly the conscience of humanity, acting as beacons and showing us the way to a world eventually free of all weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to pay the highest tribute to the Department of Disarmament Affairs, under the able and dynamic leadership of my friend, Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, who I am pleased to see is on the podium, for its work in promoting the disarmament agenda of the United Nations.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Like other speakers who have spoken before me, I wish warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee and for the manner in which you are guiding our debate. Your entire Bureau can rely upon the full support and cooperation of my delegation, which is taking up our work in the spirit of openness and conciliation.

I also wish to take this opportunity to condemn, once more, the heinous recent attacks which struck our host city, New York, and America as a whole, and to convey once again to the American people and Government our deep sympathy. The historic debate which took place right here last week was an opportunity for the entire international community firmly to commit itself to strengthen cooperation in fighting the serious scourge of international terrorism. These criminal acts highlight the urgent need for profound thought on the nature of the dangers threatening the world today. Our perception of the threat would thus be altered and the concept of security resulting from it would lay down guidelines for defining and putting into effect a new form of international cooperation.

The climate of tension that has prevailed since the resurgence of the terrorist risk gives special poignancy to the present nature of the debates in the Committee, some of which have been going on for decades. The time seems ripe for an increase in our collective awareness in order to speed up significant progress in the areas under discussion, namely peace and security and general and complete disarmament. It is on these items that my delegation now wishes to make a few observations.

First, with regard to international peace and security, in addition to the need for increased international cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations, we need to emphasize more than ever global and coherent strategies for conflict prevention. In this context we can never overstate the need to strengthen the role and increase the ways and means of the United Nations to prevent conflicts. Recommendations contained in the report presented by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and the Security Council last June on the prevention of armed conflict, should be appropriately followed up. This is the moment for me to welcome the honour which has just been conferred on the United Nations and the Secretary-General by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize, which was just announced this morning. Indubitably this is a tribute and encouragement that cannot go unnoticed among Member States and I welcome it.

Special emphasis needs to be given to a well-defined strategy for the maintenance and consolidation of peace. Here, as is often the case, the problem arises with regard to the measures to be applied to formulate both a policy and decisive action. We need to ensure that continuous attention is given to the report of the Working Group on the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations approved by the Millennium Summit.

In this respect I wish to recall, especially as regards Africa, the commitment contained in the Millennium Declaration

> "To encourage and sustain regional and subregional mechanisms for preventing conflict and promoting political stability, and to ensure a reliable flow of resources for peacekeeping operations on the continent". (*A/RES/55/2, para. 28*)

Moreover, with regard to disarmament, the first step would be to implement the commitment made in the Millennium Declaration, according to which the leaders of the world appeal for work towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and a reduction in the risk of small arms and landmines. There is thus urgency to speed up the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Moreover, the need to create a climate of trust between nations and to avoid a return to a nuclear arms race requires us to avoid any unilateral measures that could weaken and undermine the existing balance in the area of nuclear defence. The world today needs more than ever confidence-building measures and real will to act in concert. We need to reactivate the Conference on Disarmament so that it can finally adopt its programme of work and firmly take up serious negotiations on the issues before it in order to reach legally binding, irrevocable and verifiable agreements on disarmament.

We welcome the holding of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001 and which led to the adoption of a Programme of Action. To prevent, combat and eliminate the trade in these weapons such an objective would be strengthened if, on the one hand, States began to apply the principles recommended in the Programme and, on the other hand, a consensus could be reached on the outstanding issues. A rapid resumption of negotiations on these litigious items would certainly be an extremely significant initiative.

My country has always accorded special importance to the debate in the Committee on issues vital to mankind. But today this interest is of special importance because of the domestic Congolese context and the Central African subregional environment. Indeed, emerging from a long period of civil war, which has caused countless loss of human life and huge material destruction, every national effort is centred on measures to consolidate peace, both inside and outside the country. In this context, in March and April 2001 a national convention took place designed to create a political consensus on the conditions to strengthen peace, democracy, and measures to reconstruct the national economy. At the same time we are pursuing, with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a broad project for disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants. In the context of that project, more than 20,000 ex-militia have been demobilized, 10,292 firearms have been collected, of which 6,500 have already been destroyed, and roughly 5,600 ex-militia are being assisted in reintegration through 1,496 micro-projects.

We have taken steps with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and those groups interested in specific disarmament measures, in order to seek financing for the continuation of this vital project for the consolidation of peace in the Congo. This involves the establishment of a sustainable peace by integrating the ex-combatants in productive work and giving them new cause for hope, an alternative to resorting to violence. At the same time, in the context of the promotion of confidence-building measures at the subregional level, the Congo is actively participating in the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. This is a particularly sensitive area in view of the convulsions in the Central African subregion and the Great Lakes over the last few years.

We can easily understand why one of the recent Committee activities was to organize in Bujumbura from 14 to 16 August 2000 a subregional conference on the question of refugees and displaced persons within their own countries in the Central African subregion. The Advisory Committee has already adopted various important initiatives, namely the creation of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and is establishing a Central African multinational force. There already exists a committee of those responsible for the police in Central African countries, who are in contact with each other and consult regularly on questions of common interest. At each of the ministerial conferences the committee examines the geopolitical situation in terms of security for member States. It also discusses cooperation between the States of the subregion in the various areas of security.

At the bilateral level my country holds talks with all of its neighbours on the questions of peace and good-neighbourly relations. Agreements have been reached with Gabon, the Central African Republic, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With the latter we have just established an ongoing structure for cooperation in the field of security, that is, the organization of joint military patrols to monitor our joint border and to provide security for the people along the Congo and Oubangui rivers, which until recently were still the theatres of violent fighting and the massive displacement of peoples.

My country is committed to the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa and throughout the world through a broad variety of measures. The most recent among them are the accession of Congo to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and a modest symbolic contribution to the United Nations Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures. That shows all the interest and hope that we place in the success of the work of the Committee to which an untimely event is giving exceptional importance.

Mrs. Raholinirina (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is happy to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to guide our work. I am persuaded that the Committee will fully benefit from your qualities, both professional and personal, and that under your guidance our deliberations will come to a successful conclusion. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We also wish to pay tribute to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under the leadership of Mr. Dhanapala, for its tireless efforts to promote the cause of disarmament.

Our work takes place in a climate full of uncertainty after the terrible tragedy of 11 September 2001, which will forever mark the history of mankind. In these trying times we wish to express our sincere condolences and deep sympathy to the people and the Government of the United States. I also take this opportunity to reiterate the strongest possible condemnation by the Republic of Madagascar of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. By their very nature, terrorist acts are the clearest expression of the negation of the primacy of law and of the violation of fundamental human rights. Through its mandate the First Committee has a crucial role to play in efforts to be made to fight the scourge of terrorism which threatens international peace and security.

The abominable acts committed on 11 September showed that terrorists are ruthless in the means they use and stop at nothing. The annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 2000 is revealing in this regard. According to that document, terrorist and other groups could try to acquire nuclear material through theft. It is even more disquieting to learn from the report that the fight against the illegal trade in nuclear and radioactive weapons has increased due to the proliferation of such acts. The Secretary-General stressed this when on 1 October he told the General Assembly:

> "The greatest danger ar' es from a non-State group, or even a private individual, acquiring and using a nuclear, biological or chemical weapon". (*A/56/PV.12*)

In the face of this grave threat, Madagascar cannot but support the Secretary-General's appeal for States to redouble their efforts to ensure the universality, verification and full implementation of key treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction. We also endorse his proposal for the tightening of national legislation over exports of goods and technologies needed to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. At any rate, in accordance with the Millennium Declaration, our ultimate objective must be a world free from weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

History has shown that nuclear weapons are the most fearsome weapons ever invented by human beings. The risk of their use by terrorists only aggravates the threat posed by nuclear weapons to the survival of mankind. There is not a shadow of a doubt that for as long as there are nuclear weapons on our planet a world free from fear will be only a dream. In the area of nuclear disarmament, we regret the absence of tangible progress in making a reality of the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear Powers made at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Thus the hope raised by the positive results of that Conference has been replaced by concern.

The inability of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on its agenda and begin negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty does not inspire us with optimism either. To this we must add the lack of sufficient progress in the universal ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Other reasons for concern are the inability of the Disarmament Commission to agree on the holding of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and the looming arms race in outer space.

The many challenges that we face require that we renew our commitment to the cause of disarmament as a whole. The positive results achieved so far should encourage us to persevere and to redouble our efforts in this long and difficult enterprise. In this context, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, Asia and Latin America constitute a valuable step forward in the nuclear disarmament process. The creation of these zones, on the basis of agreements between the States of the region concerned should be encouraged, since it contributes to the strengthening of regional security and of mutual confidence among these States. Convinced that transparency favours the establishment of a climate of confidence, which is essential for lasting peace, Madagascar welcomes the increase in the number of States participating in the United Nations

Register of Conventional Arms. We are in favour of any initiative to increase participation in the Register.

Guided by its deep attachment to peace, in this year 2001, which marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, Madagascar would like to see a more active contribution by all the parties concerned in the search for ways and means to realize the fundamental objectives of that Declaration.

The century that has just ended was marked by bloody conflicts, most of them fed by the proliferation of light weapons. The holding in July this year of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was a historic occasion to agree on the development of a global strategy to fight this scourge. Despite its deficiencies in certain areas which are deemed essential by most delegations, including my own, the Programme of Action adopted by that Conference must be implemented as soon as possible in order to curb the devastating effects of light weapons. As the continent most affected by the phenomenon of the illegal trade in light weapons, Africa looks forward to meaningful signs of the speedy implementation of the Programme of Action, especially in the area of technical and financial assistance. The efforts of the African States in the fields of conflict prevention, conflict settlement and post-conflict peace-building deserve to be supported by the international community through the strengthening of the capacity of Africa for peace operations by equipping it with the necessary training and adequate means.

Along the same lines, Madagascar hopes that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa will become fully operational so that it can make an effective contribution to the promotion of peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region.

Like other developing regions, Africa has also known the agony caused by anti-personnel landmines, which cause unspeakable suffering to civilian populations, just as light weapons do. My delegation therefore welcomes the holding in Managua, from 18 to 21 September 2001, of the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Madagascar hopes that this Convention will gain universal adherence, in order to put an end to the suffering of civilian populations, which are an easy target for this category of arms in times of war and in times of peace. Madagascar likewise deems it timely to establish in Africa a zone free of anti-personnel landmines.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization notes the constant increase in global military expenditures recorded in certain industrialized countries and in various developing countries. This sombre assessment leads us to state that lasting security lies not in the accumulation of weapons, but in relations based on confidence and full respect for the noble objectives enshrined in the Charter. The close link between peace and development, which is an undeniable reality, makes more relevant than ever the need to allocate the colossal sums spent on the arms race to development efforts.

The current situation requires a fresh look at our approaches and convictions regarding security. Our choice is clear: the narrow path of selfish national interest or the broader path of international peace and prosperity.

My delegation hopes that at this very special session our choice will be guided by the voice of wisdom throughout our deliberations, in order to make this Committee an instrument capable of producing the drive required for the peace dynamic on which our common future depends.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): May I at the outset felicitate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election. We are confident that your competence and in-depth knowledge of the issues that come within the purview of the First Committee will be invaluable in guiding a productive session. Let me also thank your predecessor, my friend Ambassador Mya Than, for his valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee as the Chairman at the last session.

My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala and the officials of his Department, both here in New York and in Geneva, for their laudable work. It is all the more commendable since the Department for Disarmament Affairs is the smallest department of the United Nations Secretariat but is responsible for one of the main priority areas of the Organization.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the United Nations Secretariat on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which both Mr. Annan and the United Nations richly deserve.

This year the First Committee is meeting for its annual assessment of international security and disarmament at a very crucial juncture. Our host country, in particular this city in which we are located, and the international community as a whole have witnessed a terrible human tragedy. We unequivocally condemn such terrorist attacks. Having experienced similar barbaric acts of terrorism, we in Sri Lanka very well understand and share the anguish and pain of those who have suffered from such acts of indiscriminate violence perpetrated on innocent civilians. Sri Lanka stands shoulder to shoulder with the United States and with the rest of the world to eradicate the menace of terrorism.

While learning lessons from such tragedies, we need to reflect deeply on the necessary measures, some relating to the work of the Committee, to bring a sense of realism and purpose to our endeavours. There are quite a few issues in this regard on which we need to focus our attention.

One primary measure is the urgent need to work together to create an international legal regime that encompasses all spheres of human activity and that would not allow, or would leave no room for, anyone to perpetrate acts of terrorism against innocent civilians. The taking of such measures should be the responsibility of all branches of the United Nations system. We could also assess what contribution or specific input, either directly or indirectly, the First Committee could make towards that objective.

The question also arises of whether weapon-based security, which militarily powerful States seem to pursue, could bring security and peace for the inhabitants of those States. It has been assumed by some for a long time that the security of a nation-State could be assured by a weapon-based system of security with an array of weapons of mass destruction and attendant technologically advanced delivery vehicles. Such an impressive arsenal, it was calculated, would deter real and perceived enemies. Yet, even with such overwhelming military power, the ability to ensure physical security for all people in a State apparently remains elusive. Therefore, the quest for more advanced weapon systems does not appear to help much in ensuring human security.

Moreover, the ability of non-State actors to lay their hands not only on small arms and light weapons but also possibly on weapons and means of mass destruction has emerged as a matter of grave concern. In this context we welcome the initiative taken by the Department for Disarmament Affairs to host a special symposium on terrorism and disarmament. We expect that the discussion in this forum will provide new insights into this important issue, and especially on how terrorism would impact on disarmament measures.

Since the establishment of the United Nations 50 years ago, we have debated many theoretical perspectives on how best to achieve international peace and security that will benefit all the peoples of the world. We have discussed a range of theories, including the concept of common security, as well as the implications of the theory of mutually assured destruction, and several others.

The Millennium Declaration adopted at the turn of this century by our heads of States underlined the axiom of peace and security with less armament and more cooperation. The Declaration also reiterated the often repeated desire of humankind for common security based on collective reliance, at both national and international levels. The hope was held out that countries would pause in their desire for increased weaponization and would even roll back ongoing programmes. It was natural for us to expect that such lofty ideals would percolate down towards the various United Nations disarmament and security forums such as this Committee and the Conference on Disarmament, and bodies for treaty review. However, it is apparent that developments since the Millennium Summit have led us in the opposite direction.

International disarmament and arms control treaty systems have been challenged in many ways. Several treaty review mechanisms are becoming theatres for polemics. Treaties currently in force are contested for being outdated on the basis of unproven theories and technological abilities. The spirit and the purpose of some other widely adhered-to treaties are being violated because of a distinct lack of commitment for implementation measures by the parties to the treaties, and ill-motivated actions by those outside. The rule-based international conduct required to be observed under several treaty regimes is therefore being challenged. In this regard it is evident that the post-cold-war search by major Powers on how to achieve strategic balance or national security postures with or without nuclear weapons is not yet settled. That is obviously at the expense of a very large number of bystanders. All these developments do not bode well for our efforts in this Committee and elsewhere to achieve international peace and security.

The most glaring victim of this retrograde trend is the Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva. That United Nations body, specially constituted for disarmament treaty-making, has tied itself in knots, resulting in a stalemate, primarily as a result of the strategic and tactical postures of some of its members. The Conference, touted as the world's single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, remains inactive for the fourth year running. Neither the spirit of the Millennium Declaration nor the solemn commitment at the 2000 NPT Review Conference has had any positive effect in triggering meaningful action in the Conference on Disarmament.

Sri Lanka is firmly convinced that the Conference on Disarmament should work towards the goals for which it was originally established. In this spirit, and as a manifestation of our commitment to make that forum useful again, I accepted the responsibility entrusted to me by the members of the Conference on Disarmament to coordinate the efforts of the Conference to find ways and means to ensure its improved and effective functioning. There were several other issues, such as expansion of the membership and agenda of the Conference that were discussed simultaneously.

It was clear that an overwhelming number of the members of the Conference on Disarmament desire — and in fact are even ready — to change its rules of procedure with a view to making it more productive. During our deliberations several innovative ideas were discussed on how the Conference could be productive, pending the commencement of full-fledged negotiations towards specific treaty regimes. My delegation expects this process of consultation to continue at the next session of the Conference on Disarmament so as to arrive at concrete decisions.

The objective of a world without nuclear weapons still remains as distant as ever. It is our earnest desire that this year will be the watershed in our quest for more resolute action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This practically unusable weapon still remains in the armouries of several countries. There is also a likelihood that the number of countries in possession of such weapons will increase if the mystique and power status attached to them is not removed and a clear action programme established to eliminate them.

At the same time, the endeavour of some countries to delink efforts for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons from those of nuclear disarmament is a matter of serious concern. Such an approach is not only preposterous but fraught with danger. The world will never be safe with a regime that would create permanent "haves" and "have nots" in nuclear weaponry. Such an arrangement is inherently unstable and unbalanced. History is full of failures of such projects in all fields of human activity, and in such instances the ultimate levelling-off has created major upheavals. Moreover, the perpetual existence of weapons of mass destruction, and arrangements at apparently managing them safely, are not only untenable and contradictory but could lead to unpredictable, disastrous consequences. In this regard we believe that the Secretary-General's proposal for an international conference on eliminating nuclear dangers is a step in the right direction and should receive greater attention at this juncture.

My country, together with Egypt, has had the honour for many years to bring to the attention of the Committee the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This is a manifestation of our often repeated belief that the last frontier of humankind, outer space, should remain peaceful as our common heritage and that this is vital for preserving stability and security on earth. However, our efforts to obtain consensus and to work towards concrete action on this issue have not yet produced results.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, which was first established by the Conference on Disarmament in 1985 and chaired by Sri Lanka in 1998, has already examined and identified a number of important issues and proposals as well as a few initiatives relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The re-establishment of that Ad Hoc Committee by the Conference on Disarmament has the broad support of its members. However, differences persist regarding the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee. In this context we hope that the resolution on this subject in the First Committee this year will mark further progress towards our ultimate goal, and not a retreat from what has already been achieved.

Despite the progress recently achieved at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, we remain deeply concerned that unless we take further resolute action the problem will remain as acute as ever. We congratulate Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodriguez of

Colombia on his invaluable contribution as the Chairman of the Conference and welcome the consensus Programme of Action that was adopted.

However, it is our view that this modest achievement should not be considered as an end in itself. We expect the United Nations to play a major role in the implementation of the agreed measures and follow-up actions. At the same time, States and regional and international organizations, including the United Nations system, should continue to develop and support action-oriented research on this complex issue with a view to bringing forth other relevant and interconnected issues pertaining to the illicit transfer, manufacture and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially those that relate to non-State actors. Such efforts should focus on issues that were not adequately addressed during the preparatory process leading up to the Conference. In particular, brokering, tracing, and modes of conveyance should not be treated merely as law-and-order issues.

In this regard, Sri Lanka welcomes the proposal made by the Rio Group of countries to hold a debate on the prohibition of the sale of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. Moreover, in our view, the question of the supply of ammunition and explosives is an important related issue and should not be put on the back burner. After all, without ammunition a small arm becomes a primitive weapon, a stick.

The difficulty and complexity of addressing some of these issues need not be an obstacle. Even at this hour more and more civilians are being killed indiscriminately by armed combatants and terrorists using small arms and explosives. In fact, if we are unable to monitor and control the production and transfer of sophisticated explosives, a vehicle such as a ship or an airplane could easily be converted into a weapon of mass destruction, with enough explosives packed into it.

We deeply regret that the initiative aimed at establishing a protocol for verification and compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has ended in Geneva without final agreement. The credibility of international instruments such as the BWC, prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of their verification regimes. The establishment of such verification regimes can be accomplished only through open and transparent multilateral negotiations.

A more disturbing factor is that for the foreseeable future the BWC is likely to remain the only treaty dealing with a weapon of mass destruction that has no verification mechanism. The implications of this situation would certainly have adverse effects on the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly at a time when the international community is preparing to deal with the menace of terrorism. The growing threat of terrorism and the capacity of terrorists to use means of mass destruction such as biological and toxin weapons should not be overlooked or underestimated.

It is apparent that international security perceptions and paradigms are in a state of flux at this moment. The promise of a peace dividend at the end of the cold war and at the onset of the twenty-first century has not been realized. In this context, we wish to emphasize the value of rule-based conduct for States and for their peoples. The evolution of strategic perceptions and the advent of new security paradigms should not undermine the existing sense of worldwide stability and security. New strategic visions and challenges, as well as threat perceptions, are best addressed in a multilateral context. Unilateralism should be avoided at all costs.

Acts of terrorism that have caused unprecedented havoc in many parts of the world generate the need for a global compact on human security that will benefit both Member States of the United Nations and the peoples of the world. It is apparent that the security of a State does not necessarily translate into the security and well-being of a global citizen in a globalizing world. Only a rule-based system that is as robust and globally respected as that now operating in several other fields of human endeavour will have the capacity to assure international peace and security. We need to formulate and agree upon a rule-based system of security and conduct that will be respected by States, civil society and the global citizen. In this context my delegation expects that the First Committee deliberations will be a fruitful exercise and will engender a set of resolutions that will lend us strength to implement an effective programme of work in other security and disarmament forums, beneficial for all countries and all peoples.

Mr. Castellón Duarte (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I wish to express my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First

Committee of the General Assembly for the present session. I am sure that thanks to your experience in the area of disarmament and your well-known diplomatic skills you will guide our work with great efficiency. We pledge the support of our delegation in your task.

First, I wish to align myself with the statement made by the delegation of Chile on Monday, 8 October, on behalf of the Rio Group.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September compel us to develop and implement new concepts that will guarantee national and international security. These cruel and violent terrorist acts make it necessary to increase our efforts for the control of armaments, for disarmament and for non-proliferation. These vile and perfidious acts have given rise to a coalition to fight terrorism, which constitutes a threat to global order and social coexistence. We reiterate our solidarity with the people and the Government of the United States of America.

My delegation expresses its consternation over the continuation of the large-scale illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the various regions of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean. Small arms and light weapons have a set of characteristics that make them the weapons of choice in internal conflicts and in actions carried out by terrorist groups, insurgent forces, drug traffickers and irregular troops. Their main victims are invariably defenceless civilians.

The Conference that was held in July this year is a major first step in the effective fight against this scourge that knows no geographic borders and that each year violates the human rights of millions of persons. The Programme of Action to prevent, fight and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects has a reasonable and broad approach to addressing the various problems associated with the diverse aspects of this trade at national, regional and global levels. Nevertheless, in the future we must make progress, especially regarding objectives that could not be adopted at the Conference, such as the control and sale of these weapons to non-State entities.

The Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, was unable for the fourth consecutive year to agree on an agenda, which made it impossible to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty for military purposes. We deem it necessary for the member States of that forum to act in good faith to eliminate the obstacles that stand in the way of its normal operation and, thus, progress in its work.

We agree, and much more so after the events of 11 September last, that nuclear weapons are a permanent danger since there is a possibility that they could be used. The consequences of a nuclear attack can never be contained within the borders of a country or within the territories of the belligerent parties. Countries possessing nuclear weapons have a very important responsibility because of the damage that would be caused to innocent populations, especially in the case of an accident or, through neglect, their use by terrorists. Those countries must do everything in their power to prevent these dangers from becoming a reality.

The conclusions of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) reaffirm the conviction that the full and effective implementation of the Treaty and the non-proliferation regime in all its aspects has a vital role to play in the promotion of international peace and security. Strict compliance with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is vital for the maintenance of global security and constitutes the unequivocal path towards the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. The 13 measures adopted last year by the States parties to the NPT must be implemented as soon as possible, especially by the nuclear Powers.

My Government is firmly convinced that the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, dated 8 July 1996, continues to be of great importance in the area of nuclear disarmament. It clearly establishes that States have the legal obligation to carry out negotiations in good faith leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects and to conclude them as soon as possible.

The delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a source of concern to us, and we urge States that have not signed or ratified it to do so as soon as possible. One opportunity could be the forthcoming second Conference on the entry into force of the Treaty. According to the record, 13 ratifications are still necessary for it to enter into force, two of them by States that possess nuclear weapons.

As a State party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), we support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all geographic regions, since these constitute one of the most important advances made by the international community to promote confidence and a safer and more stable world. However, we must move even further along the road to disarmament since, as stated in the above-mentioned Treaty, although militarily non-nuclear areas make a decisive contribution to international peace and security, they are not an end in themselves but a means to achieve general and complete disarmament in a subsequent stage.

The demining work in Nicaragua has made great progress in recent years thanks to a programme carried out by the Nicaraguan army with the support of the Organization of American States (OAS) and of the Governments of various friendly States that have cooperated by providing technical personnel and financing. These include the United States, Norway, Argentina, Denmark, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Spain, Brazil, El Salvador and Guatemala.

At the end of the civil war of the 1980s more than 135,000 of these devices remained in Nicaraguan soil. About half of these mines have been destroyed by the army, which has demined more than 2 million square metres of the national territory. The southern border of the country has been declared free of anti-personnel landmines. According to Red Cross data, buried mines cause about 50 accidents each year; 90 per cent of the victims are civilian, and of these 65 per cent are children and adolescents. Other sources indicate that more than 200 people have died in accidents caused by anti-personnel landmines, and the OAS states that more than 800 persons — women, men and children — have been incapacitated by explosions of mines and other explosive devices.

About 130,000 mines remained in the warehouses of the army after the conflict. About 70,000 of these devices were destroyed before September this year. On the occasion of the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in Managua, another 20,000 were destroyed. We hope that by 2004 the last mine will have been eliminated from Nicaraguan soil. On the other hand, we must mention that the demining commission in Nicaragua has emphasized the rehabilitation and social reintegration of the victims of mines, as well as the work of prevention and awareness in this regard. We know that a million mines are planted in 11 countries of Latin America, 110 million throughout the world, and their unexpected explosions kill or maim about 70 persons each day.

The Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention was held in Managua from 18 to 21 September in a world shaken by the barbaric terrorist attacks in the United States. Because of the attacks my Government could have chosen to change the dates of this Conference but, as announced by the Foreign Minister of my country at the inauguration of the Conference, that was not done for two basic reasons: first, because the meeting was of great importance for global peace and for the millions of citizens who live in countries where the scourge of anti-personnel mines represents a threat for old people, persons in the prime of life, and children; and, secondly, because we did not want to give in to terrorism. We did not want ourselves to be cornered by these sinister and cowardly forces which seek to interrupt normalcy, paralyse us, and turn us into hostages of fear, all in the name of causes that are presented as noble objectives. By coming to Nicaragua, the delegates of more than 90 States gave a vote of confidence to peace, to the peaceful solution of conflicts and to civilization, and a resounding "no" to hatred, the law of the jungle and senseless and cowardly violence.

The Declaration of Managua reaffirms among other aspects the unfailing commitment of the States parties to the Convention to the total eradication of anti-personnel mines and to deal with their treacherous and inhuman effects. It also calls on all States that continue to use, produce or acquire anti-personnel mines, to stop these activities at once. Those States that have stated their commitment to the purposes of the Convention must recognize that continued use of such mines was a clear violation of their commitment. We also welcomed the broad support achieved by the Convention through more than 120 ratifications and 21 signatures, including more than 40 States affected by mines. It was recognized that the new international standards established by the Convention were a milestone in its implementation, including the conduct of many States not parties to the Convention but which respect its provisions.

Today, together with the delegations of Belgium and Norway, we will circulate a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction" and we ask interested delegations, especially those from any State that is a party to the Convention, to co-sponsor it. We will soon present the draft to the Secretariat.

Mr. Draganov (Bulgaria): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that the diplomatic skills and the knowledge of disarmament issues you and the Bureau bring to the deliberations of the First Committee will facilitate the successful completion of our endeavours. Let me assure you, Sir, of my delegation's support and cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

One issue has dominated the world's attention over the past few weeks. We are still trying to come to terms with the horrible terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September. A tragedy of this scale does blow away a lot of illusions. A new look at hard realities is required and we are all being put to the test of where we stand and what we stand for. Clearly, new approaches to security, strengthening the non-proliferation and disarmament regimes and broad international cooperation are becoming even more essential in reducing the threats posed to mankind today. As demonstrated by the 11 September attacks, the unacceptable menace posed by terrorism requires from the international community an even more vigorous response and complex safeguards, particularly against any possible access by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction. Terrorism today is directed against the very foundations of human civilization and it is up to the whole of humanity to defend its values. We believe this Committee is highly relevant to the efforts to make our world a safer place.

The Bulgarian Government and Parliament expressed its sympathy and solidarity with all the victims and their relatives from more than 80 countries and offered the United States Government its unequivocal support in undertaking the long struggle to fight terrorism. Bulgaria is proud to be an active member of the international coalition against terrorism. On behalf of my delegation I express to the members of the United States delegation our admiration for the courage and strength displayed by the American people in these trying times.

At the beginning of the week, the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Jean Lint, delivered a statement on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries, and Norway. Ambassador Lint addressed the problems of international security and disarmament in a comprehensive way. Bulgaria has already aligned itself with that statement so I will only highlight some issues of particular importance for my delegation.

As a candidate for NATO and European Union membership and an active member of the United Nations, Bulgaria has endeavoured to introduce top, international-standard export controls on foreign trade in arms and dual-use goods and technologies. A consistent and responsible policy in export controls remains a high priority task for my Government; it is an essential element of our strategy for accession to NATO and the European Union, and an effective contribution to the global fight to counter international terrorism. Last April the Bulgarian Government decreed a consolidated list of countries and organizations to which the Republic of Bulgaria applies prohibitions or restrictions on the sale and supply of arms and related equipment. The list is in full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions and the relevant European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) decisions. The control lists applied by Bulgaria effectively implement the unified and annually updated European Union lists for dual-use goods and technologies, the Wassenaar Arrangement munitions list in the field of the arms trade, as well as the lists of other multilateral and regional arrangements for non-proliferation.

Recently, Bulgaria was officially admitted as a full member to the Australia Group. We value that membership as recognition of the non-proliferation policies pursued by Bulgaria and the efficient export control systems in place. Let me mention that while not yet a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), my country unilaterally controls all the items placed on the equipment and technology control list of the MTCR. Bulgaria has declared its interest in becoming a member of the MTCR as well.

The excessive and destabilizing accumulation of, and illicit trafficking in, small arms and light weapons help to aggravate ethnic and political violence, exacerbate human casualties and suffering, undermine post-conflict rehabilitation, and feed terrorism and organized crime. As an active Member of the United Nations Bulgaria adheres to the efforts of the international community to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In fulfilment of our international commitments and the programme for restructuring the Bulgarian Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defence is carrying out projects for the destruction of existing small arms and light weapons surpluses. We are in close cooperation with a number of partners such as the United States of America, Canada, Great Britain, Norway, the Netherlands and others on a whole range of issues related to stockpile management and destruction of small arms and light weapons. In accordance with the Programme of Action adopted in July by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, more than 75,000 small arms are now being destroyed. Bulgaria is also an initiator of many subregional and regional efforts regarding small arms and light weapons in the framework of various forums and organizations, such as the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, the European Union, the OSCE, the NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council working group on small arms and light weapons.

The issue of eliminating the mine threat in our region has always been a high priority for my country. In October 1998, Bulgaria proposed to the South-East European States a political commitment not to use anti-personnel mines and not to deploy them in areas adjacent to their common borders. Bulgaria ratified amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) on 4 November 1998, thus contributing to the timely entry into force of this important international instrument. All obligations arising from that document have been strictly implemented ever since. An important milestone on the way to turning the region into an anti-personnel-mine-free zone was the Agreement between Bulgaria and Turkey, signed in March 1999, on the non-use of anti-personnel mines and their removal from or destruction in the areas adjacent to the common border. A new step in this direction was the recent decision by the Turkish and Greek Governments to conclude a similar agreement, and simultaneously to adhere to the mine-ban Treaty.

By the end of December 2000, Bulgaria had demined all its minefields, destroyed its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and became 100 per cent free of anti-personnel mines. Bulgaria reiterates its readiness to provide expertise and to participate actively in the destruction of anti-personnel mines globally. The Bulgarian specialized agencies have the capacity, as well as their own technology, to participate in such operations. We believe that the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe has the potential to pave the way for the establishment of an anti-personnel-mine-free zone in the region. Bulgaria will continue to work towards that goal.

In view of the forthcoming Second Review Conference of the CCW, Bulgaria supports the efforts of the President-designate to coordinate work on the different proposals for further strengthening the CCW. We fully share all constructive contributions aimed at increasing the humanitarian effect of the Convention.

In conclusion, allow me to express the hope of my delegation that the sense of unity and partnership shown by the international community in forming the new global coalition against terrorism will also serve as a guiding example and a source of inspiration in our debate on disarmament and international security.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.